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VOL. 2726.

SUNNY STORIES AND SOME SHADY ONES.

BY

JAMES PAYN.

IN ONE VOLUME.

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SUNNY STORIES

AND SOME SHADY ONES

BY

JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "BY PROXY," "HIGH SPIRITS," ETC.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1891.

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SUNNY STORIES.

DAUNTLESS KITTY.

In those good old times when England was "Merry England" and May fell later, and admitted of dancing in the open air, there was a great deficiency of roads; they were few in number and bad of their kind, besides being infested with highwaymen. In these days we have roads in plenty, and no footpads; but also no footpaths, of which our ancestors had an abundance. Not only near London and other large towns, but all the land over, the pedestrian is being more and more shut out from the fields by hideous placards with "Trespassers beware!" upon them, and constrained, like cattle, to keep to the dusty highway. The placards will doubtless be swept away (with much else better worth keeping) at a no distant date (or so it seems to those who read the signs of the times), but in the meantime the walkist (as our American cousin calls him) suffers. Even in the Lake Country the nuisance is growing, and the very mountains are getting a ring-fence put round them, as if in sign of the union of selfishness and short-sight in their proprietors.

Thus it happens that the country, for him who loves it, has begun to signify only those parts of England in which he can move with the old freedom; where one can still go by footpaths from church-spire to church-spire, through the purple clover or the golden wheat, with no other obstruction than the stile, itself a place of rest, with room for two upon it, which is the right number for company. This was one of the reasons which (besides health and youth) made Marlstone such a charming spot to me years ago, when I was reading there for—well, for something I never got—with my private tutor. The whole district was full of footpaths, and there was a short-cut to everywhere, which was always longer than the long way round, because one dawdled so over its beauties. There were roads, of course, and one a turnpike one; but, with that exception, even these were very different from the bare, broad highways on which cyclists nowadays beat other cyclists' "records." They were lanes with wild, luxuriant hedgerows, or leafy walls that met above one's head, with sudden glimpses, over lichened gates, of all the country round, and bordered in noble extravagance with tufted grass, where the travelling tinker's hobbled horse fed, or the gipsies pitched their tents, and the pretty ones told your fortune—if you looked as if you had one to speak of, and crossed their palms with silver.

In winter, it is true, they were muddy, not to say boggy; and there being no arrangement for lighting them in the evening, there were incidents in night

travel that foolish townsfolk would perhaps have magnified into accidents. In the country concussion of the brain hardly makes any difference to the inhabitants, and the breaking of a collar-bone is less than a shirt-button coming off (especially at the back of the neck) to the Londoner.

We were not always studying at the Vicarage, and, indeed, had plenty of time for making the acquaintance of our neighbours; though croquet had not been born, nor lawn-tennis thought of, there were opportunities of meeting offered to young people, of which my tutor's pupils frequently availed themselves. We fell in love pretty constantly with the young ladies of the county, though not very far, nor so as to hurt ourselves much, for falling in love (especially in youth) is a very different thing from falling in battle; but whomsoever we loved of these high-born damsels, there was always a corner in our hearts left for Kitty Carol, who was no "young lady" at all. It was a most innocent proceeding—as, for my part, I am prepared, with my hand upon my heart, to swear—and only the natural outcome of the tenderness of our years and the chivalry of our hearts; and, at all events, we could not help it. Slight as a fairy, and very little bigger; graceful as a fawn; beautiful as a houri (only much more modest than they are represented by the prophet); and wearing all that weight of learning (for though but nineteen, she was the village schoolmistress) like a flower, she enthralled us all.

Perhaps if some of our mammas had known of her

existence, they would have been as interested in her as we were, though in another way. They would have marked her "dangerous"—like the place in the pond where the springs rose, and always made our ice unsafe —and drawn our tutor's attention to her; but it would have been a superfluous act, inasmuch as (1) it was already there, for he paid her very particular attention; and (2) she had a lover of her own, to whom, it is my conviction, she would have been true and faithful, even if Castleton, our only lord (for which he suffered at our hands), had laid at her feet his title, his stammer, and all that he had or would have.

This swain of hers was Geoffrey Grimshaw, son of the wealthy yeoman of that name, but better known among us as "Old Grim." The old farmer was not, indeed, either in appearance or dress, an agreeable person, especially if he found us on his land with a gun in our hands, or even a fishing-rod, as he often did. "Perhaps," he would say, with a fine irony, on such occasions, "you thinks because you are young gentlemen that the law of trespass—ay, and agin' shootin', very like, without a license—was never meant for such as you; but Giles Grimshaw will teach you different. And as for yon lordling" (for we tried Castleton's rank on him, which we had found useful on similar occasions), "I don't care one snap for his title! Why, his feyther, I hear, has got as many mortgages on his estate as he has Christian names, and don't know where to turn for a guinea."

This frankness, though it always sent us into fits of laughter, was of course far from polite; and since he treated comparative strangers in that way, one may guess how his only son fared, who was entirely dependent on him. None of our mammas, indeed, would have been more horrified at the idea of our marrying portionless Kitty Carol than he would have been at that of her becoming Mrs. Geoffrey Grimshaw; and poor Jeff, as we called him (for we all liked the handsome young fellow, who took the prizes for back-sword and cudgel play throughout the neighbourhood), had to carry on his love-affair with the utmost secrecy and caution. It was only because the old farmer thought so much of himself and his wealth, and that Jeff would never venture to fall in love with any woman without his permission, that the thing was kept from him—a very just punishment for his egotism and greed.

But we pupils were all in the secret of Jeff's love-affair, and many a laugh had we at Kitty's expense about it, though she protested that, for her part, she did not know what we meant, and knew no more of the young man, save what she had seen of him at "the sports" and from the gallery in church. For Kitty was organist (if a ten-pound harmonium can be called an organ) as well as schoolmistress, and had a better view of the congregation than even the vicar himself; and often had I seen her bright eyes glance at the Grimshaw pew, to be reflected by another glance (not from Old

Grim's eyes, which were generally closed in slumber), like the sun upon a window.

It was curious how a girl so quiet and simple, and a young fellow so frank and honest as Jeff, could manage matters so cleverly as not to excite suspicion in a quarter which would have been fatal to their success; but Jeff's father knew little about her—certainly not how lovely she was, which showed how very old Old Grim was getting—except that she had £40 a year from the parish, which he thought and said was £20 too much.

Besides this little income, she had the school-house to live in rent-free, which was of course an object to her, though not one girl out of ten would have dared to take advantage of it; for the school-house was some little distance from the village, and stood quite by itself, and in the winter nights it must have seemed a lonesome place enough to her. There was but one living-room and a bedchamber above the school-room, so that she could not have kept a servant, even if she could have afforded it; and Kitty was anxious to save every penny against the day when Old Grim should discover their secret, and turn Jeff out of doors into her arms.

Nothing, she was justly persuaded, would ever persuade Jeff to give her up; but in the meantime the young couple waited with the greatest patience, putting by what they could; and if dear Kitty—being human, after all—had a vague hope that perhaps her father-in-

law *in futuro* might be mercifully removed from this troublesome world, she said little about it to anybody, and least of all to her sweetheart. He had no serious rival, though, of course, we should all have liked to be in his shoes; but at one time, young as she was, she had had her admirers, before Jeff had declared himself. One of them had been Dick Tarlton, the apothecary's son, who had gone to the bad, as some fools said, in consequence of her neglecting him, which, considering he was a drunkard before, and not wholly unconnected with sheep stealing (though he got off on an alibi), seemed to the last degree improbable.

Nowadays, when every blackguard is whitewashed by some theory or another connected with his birth or bringing up, and nobody is bad of himself, but only made so, Dick would doubtless have been less harshly judged; but opinion in Marlstone in my time respecting him was that he was a scoundrel; and we pitied his poor father instead of laying the blame on him for having begotten him. He loafed about the place, and took everything out of the apothecary he could lay his hands on, except the drugs, though a little prussic acid would have suited his case to a nicety, and been a satisfaction to everybody.

One winter's night I was woke out of my sleep at the vicarage by the sound of a great bell, and huddling on a few clothes, roused up the vicar. "There must be a conflagration, sir, somewhere," I cried excitedly, "for the fire-bell is going!" My tutor, who piqued himself

on his logical faculties, pushed up his night-cap over his forehead, as he sat in bed, and began to demonstrate that I was labouring under a delusion, because there was no fire-bell in the parish.

"Well, it's not the church bell, sir."

"I hope not, indeed, at such an hour as this," he answered, for he was a stickler for his ecclesiastical privileges; "it is only a singing in your ears, which a blue pill——" But here he heard the clanging of the bell himself. "Good heavens!" he cried, "it is from the school-house;" and he was out of bed in a second.

In five minutes we were all flying down the road in our greatcoats (and little else) to Kitty's rescue. The vicar had told her if ever she was in trouble to ring the school-bell, and there was no doubt that something was amiss with her. As we passed Grimshaw's farm we saw no light in the windows, which seemed strange, for although we knew Old Grim had gone away for a day or two, it was amazing that Jeff had not been roused by the bell; and, as it was still ringing, he could not have preceded us. However, there was no time for speculation, for we were all running our hardest, Castleton leading, because his lordship had the longest legs.

The moon was at its full, and around the school-house it was almost as light as day. On the ground in front of it, white with frost, lay a man and a ladder, the latter with most of its rungs smashed, and the former with his leg broken. They must both have had

a nasty fall. The man was Mr. Richard Tarlton, white and speechless.

"What the deu—deu—deuce are you doing here, you bl—bl—blackguard?" stammered his lordship; but not a word did the other say, and still the great bell jangled away in its belfry.

"What is it, Kitty?" cried my tutor, banging at the door with the thick cudgel with which he had provided himself. "It is the vicar—we are your friends here; come down."

Then pretty Kitty came down and unlocked the door, very pale and trembling, but looking lovelier than ever in her winter dressing-gown. As soon as she caught sight of the prostrate figure in the road she set up a little scream.

"Oh, the poor man!" she said; "I am sure he has hurt himself most dreadfully. It was his screams that frightened me so."

"It was something else that frightened you first, though, my poor girl," said the vicar pitifully. "It is clear enough that this scoundrel was going to rob the house, and would have done it, but for you pushing him and his ladder backwards. You're a brave girl, a dauntless girl, Kitty! and you would have nothing to be ashamed of if you had broken his neck instead of his leg. You cowardly hound, to attack a poor girl living all alone!"—this last remark was, of course, made to Dick, who had opened his eyes and feebly asked to be taken home. This was obviously the best

thing to be done with him, because his father was an apothecary, which is almost as good as a doctor. "You shall go there in the meantime," said the vicar, with stern significance, by way of indicating that the arrangement would be but temporary, and the gaol would be his goal eventually.

So Kitty lent us her own little mattress, and four of us volunteered to carry the wretch, while the vicar superintended the proceedings as ambulance inspector. As I was the fifth man, and not wanted, I offered to stay with poor Kitty, in case she might be frightened again; but my tutor, with some irritation (he called my benevolent proposition "a pretty thing indeed," but obviously in no complimentary sense) forbade it, and bade me come along with the rest.

"Pray be careful with the poor man," were the tender-hearted girl's last words; "I am afraid he is very badly hurt."

The school-house was so far from the village that its alarm-bell had aroused no one but ourselves. Even Jeff Grimshaw, who had come home late from market (indeed, not long before the burglary had been attempted), and dog-tired, had not had his slumbers broken by it; but the next morning all Marlstone knew what had happened, and could talk of nothing else but Dauntless Kitty.

There could be no question as to the circumstances of the case. Kitty's salary had been paid her that very afternoon, being quarter-day, and Dick had thought

to make prize of her ten pounds without difficulty. Some said he had put crape on his face that she might not know him, but the more received version of the story was that the audacious reprobate had used no concealment, but trusted to her promise not to betray him if he spared her life. But, instead of being beholden to his mercy, no sooner had the courageous little creature heard the ladder grate on her window-sill than she had thrown up the sash, and, before his ugly mug could present itself, had grasped a rung or two, and thrown both thief and ladder backwards. It was wonderful how such little wrists and fairy hands could have performed such a feat, but there was the broken ladder, and Dick with his broken leg, and a rural policeman watching him, to prove it. Next Saturday the whole affair was in the county paper, from which it was copied into the London ones, and "ran the round of the Press."

Not since Grace Darling's magnificent exploit had any heroine been made so much of by the public as Kitty Carol. Her courage was extolled to the skies, and, what I believe pleased her much more (for she was a sensible girl), not only was a testimonial presented to her by the neighbourhood on vellum, but a purse of fifty guineas.

Even old Grimshaw expressed his opinion to his son that "that 'ere young schoolmistress must be a good plucked one," to which Jeff replied, with his usual caution upon that delicate subject, that "he thought

she must be so if what the newspapers said of the young woman was correct." As for my tutor's pupils, if we had all been smitten with Kitty before, we were now quite wild about her, and in some cases even driven to poetry, in which Kitty made a not very "allowable rhyme" with "pretty," and another with "witty," which was perfect enough so far as the rhyme went, but absolutely without foundation in fact. For Kitty, admirable as she was in so many ways, was not brilliant. She could write and cipher beautifully, of course, and was, as I have said, musical; but otherwise she was not an accomplished girl. With so much beauty and good sense and courage she did not need accomplishments, nor would she have suited Jeff if she had possessed them. He, too, like herself, was all naturalness and simplicity, and truthful as the day.

It was no slur upon Kitty's truth, but rather an illustration of her magnanimity and tenderness of heart, that a stranger thing now occurred (though it by no means gave the same public satisfaction) than even the incident that had made her famous. Notwithstanding the wrong that had been done her, and which might have ended disastrously indeed, Kitty declined to prosecute. She not only declared she had not recognised Dick, which would have been of very little consequence, since he had been found by us almost in the very act of burglary, but protested that she was not prepared to swear any such crime had been attempted. She had no recollection, she said, of having seen him on the ladder,

or of pushing it backwards, though she had heard the crash of it in the road and the cries of the wounded ruffian. She even added that it was solely for his sake, and not on her own account, that she had held on to the school-bell, and rung it as it had certainly never been rung before.

This latter statement was corroborated (if one could call it by such a name, when it was obviously a mere straw that he was clinging to) by Dick himself, who swore (as he would swear anything) that, being drunk (as usual), he had fallen over the ladder, just opposite the school-house, and that in that brittle weather they had both gone to pieces. And here again he was backed to some small extent by Jeff, for the ladder, which belonged to his father, had been used of late for cutting hedgerows, and he was not "prepared to swear" that it had not been left out that night in such position as to have obstructed the footpath.

Now, it was known that Dick's father, the apothecary, had called on Kitty the morning after the occurrence, and what was more likely than that he had prevailed on her not to give evidence against his good-for-nothing son?—and of course Jeff would have said anything that Kitty bade him; so this story of hers was believed by nobody. The best that could be said of it was that she was so alarmed and excited by the attempted outrage that, after her noble instincts had preserved her in the manner it was clear they had done, she remembered absolutely nothing of what had hap-

pened. Still, without her testimony there was nothing to oppose to Dick's explanation of the affair, and as my tutor expressed it (he was a magistrate, and desirous of distinguishing himself in that line), it was clear that there would be "an infamous miscarriage of justice."

And so, in point of fact, there *was*. Every engine was set to work to break down poor Kitty's resolution (her "infernal obstinacy," Old Grim called it), but without success. So angry my tutor was with her, and even with Jeff for not pressing the same arguments on her—he only said, "Well, I knows nothin' about it"—and so harshly was she treated by "the authorities," that a reaction set in in her favour, and Dauntless Kitty became more popular—on account of her magnanimity—than ever. When I quitted the Vicarage for the University I left a new set of pupils behind me even more devoted to her than the old ones: for the story of her achievement had become legend, and round her always becoming little bonnet there was a halo—not indeed of a saint (though she was that too, so far as propriety could make one), but of a heroine.

Many, many years afterwards I revisited Marlstone at the invitation of my old tutor. At first we had corresponded a little, but as time went on our communications had gradually ceased, and I knew no more of what had happened in the interval, in the place that for two happy years had been my home, than a stranger. My young companions were scattered far and wide: Castleton had become somebody else, having succeeded to his

father's peerage; another was a colonial bishop; another (the brightest of us) had perished in battle; another, alas! had "gone under," under far sadder circumstances —in disaster and disgrace. We had plenty to talk about of what concerned us more nearly before I inquired, "And what has become of pretty Kitty Carol?"

"Well, she has long become Kitty Grimshaw."

"So I expected, of course. Did Old Grim give his consent?"

"Only by silence," said the vicar—"the silence of the grave. He died rather suddenly, and then, of course, the young people—for they were still young—went their own way."

"Well, they deserved it," I said; "a more patient pair I never knew."

The vicar coughed—a little drily, I thought.

"Jeff was such a fine, frank fellow," I continued, warming with my recollection of him. "Deceit seemed so impossible to him that I always wondered how he could have kept his love for Kitty a secret from his father; and she, too, how simple——"

"Not so simple as you think, and as I used to think," interrupted the vicar.

"Ah, but you could never forgive her for refusing to prosecute that scoundrel Dick Tarlton," said I, smiling. "Did you ever learn the rights of that story, by the way?"

"I learnt the story—but there was not much rights in it," returned my companion, still more grimly. "I

am sorry to destroy an illusion of youth, my dear fellow, but that young woman made fools of us all in that matter."

"What? Dauntless Kitty? Oh, do let me hear all about it!"

"Well, briefly, this is what occurred: Jeff and she were not such a very patient couple, for, taking advantage of a month's visit that Kitty paid with my housekeeper, and he with his father, to see the World's Fair in London—the first Exhibition, you know—they got married there, and were married when you knew them."

"Well, I never!" said I.

"That is what we all said when we came to hear of it, which fortunately for them old Grimshaw never did. The farmer was away from home, you remember, on the evening of the burglary, and Jeff had gone to market; he called at the school-house on his way home, and had a late supper with his wife. As they sat at table they heard the ladder being put up at the window; Kitty was not at all frightened, yet she hardly deserved, under the circumstances, that character for dauntlessness which she long enjoyed; as for Jeff, he rather relished the notion of the surprise he would give the burglar when he should see whom he had to deal with instead of Kitty. In fact, I should think Mr. Richard Tarlton was almost as astonished at that unexpected spectacle as at finding himself falling backwards through space on to the frozen ground, with the results with which

we are acquainted. But Dick had recognised Jeff, which complicated matters very much. An arrangement was therefore entered into between them on the spot. If Dick said nothing, Kitty was to say nothing. He would thus avoid penal servitude, while the young couple would keep the secret of their marriage undisclosed. You remember how we all went on about 'those little wrists, those dainty fingers,' having pushed the ruffian to the ground. It was Jeff's fingers, which were not at all dainty, that did it. The way in which she was spoken of in the testimonial (which I am afraid I composed) makes me hot with indignation even to this hour. How modestly, and almost reluctantly, you recollect, she took that fifty guineas we presented to her as the reward of valour—and no wonder. On the other hand, it must be confessed she never perjured herself, as I thought she did, about the matter. She ran into the other room while Jeff threw the ladder backwards, and really did not witness that catastrophe."

"And how did it come out, after all?"

"Oh, Dick Tarlton—though, fortunately for Jeff and his wife, not till after old Grimshaw died, and they had made a pretence of going away and getting married—told the whole story in his cups. Public feeling here—for none of us like being made fools of—ran very strong against Kitty, and her husband had to sell the farm and go elsewhere."

"I am sorry for that," said I, with a touch of sentiment. "I should like to have seen pretty Kitty."

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"Well, one would hardly call her pretty now—she was just made a grandmother the last time I saw her; but if you do come across her, don't call her 'Dauntless Kitty,' as you used to do, for it's rather a sore subject."

A FAITHFUL RETAINER.

When I lived in the country—which was a long time ago—our nearest neighbours were the Luscombes. They were very great personages in the county indeed, and the family were greatly "respected;" though not, so far as I could discern, for any particular reason, except from their having been there for several generations. People are supposed to improve, like wine, from keeping—even if they are rather "ordinary" at starting; and the Luscombes, at the time I knew them, were considered quite a "vintage" family. They had begun in Charles II.'s time, and dated their descent from greatness in the female line. That they had managed to keep a great estate not very much impaired so long was certainly a proof of great cleverness, since there had been many spendthrifts among them; but fortunately there had been a miser or two, who had restored the average, and their fortunes.

Mr. Roger Luscombe, the present proprietor, was neither the one nor the other, but he was inclined to frugality, and no wonder; a burnt child dreads the

fire, even though he may have had nothing to do with lighting it himself, and his father had kicked down a good many thousands with the help of "the bones" (as dice were called in his day) and "the devil's books" (which was the name for cards with those that disapproved of them) and racehorses; there was plenty left, but it made the old gentleman careful and especially solicitous to keep it. There was no stint, however, of any kind at the Court, which to me, who lived in the little Vicarage of Dalton with my father, seemed a palace.

It was indeed a very fine place, with statues in the hall, and pictures in the gallery, and peacocks on the terrace. Lady Jane, the daughter of a wealthy peer, who had almost put things on their old footing with her ample dowry, was a very great lady, and had been used, I was told, to an even more splendid home; but to me, who had no mother, she was simply the kindest and most gracious woman I had ever known.

My connection with the Luscombes arose from their only son Richard being my father's pupil. We were both brought up at home, but for very different reasons. In my case it was from economy: the living was small and our family was large, though, as it happened, I had no brothers. Richard was too precious to his parents to be trusted to the tender mercies of a public school. He was in delicate health, not so much natural to him as caused by an excess of care—coddling. Though he and I were very good friends, unless

when we were quarrelling, it must be owned that he was a spoilt boy.

There is a good deal of nonsense talked of young gentlemen who are brought up from their cradles in an atmosphere of flattery *not* being spoilt; but unless they are angels—which is a very exceptional case—it cannot be otherwise. Richard Luscombe was a good fellow in many ways; liberal with his money (indeed, apt to be lavish) and kind-hearted, but self-willed, effeminate and impulsive. He had also—which was a source of great alarm and grief to his father—a marked taste for speculation.

After the age of "alley tors and commoneys," of albert-rock and hard-bake, in which we both gambled frightfully, I could afford him no opportunities of gratifying this passion; but if he could get a little money "on" anything, there was nothing that pleased him better: not that he cared for the money, but for the delight of winning it. The next moment he would have given it away to a beggar. Numbers of good people look upon gambling with even greater horror than it deserves, because they cannot understand this; the attraction of risk, and the wild joy of "pulling off" something, when the chances are against one, are unknown to them. It is the same with the love of liquor. Richard Luscombe had not a spark of that (his father left him one of the best cellars in England, but he never touches even a glass of claret after dinner; "I should as soon think," he says, "of drinking when I am

not hungry"); but he dearly liked what he called a "spec." Never shall I forget the first time he realized anything that could be termed a stake.

When he was about sixteen, he and I had driven over to some little county races a few miles away from Dalton, without, I fear, announcing our intention of so doing. Fresh air was good for "our dear Richard," and since pedestrian exercise (which he also hated) exhausted him, he had a groom and dog-cart always at his own disposal. It was a day of great excitement for me, who had never before seen a racecourse. The flags, the grand stand (a rude erection of planks, which came down, by-the-bye, the next year during the race for the cup, and reduced the sporting population), the insinuating gipsies, the bawling card-sellers, and especially the shining horses with their twisted manes, all excited my admiration.

I was well acquainted with them in fiction; and these illustrations of the books I loved so well delighted me. Richard, who had read less and seen more, was bent on business.

He was tall for his age, but very slight and youthful-looking, and the contrast of his appearance with those of the company in the little ring, composed as it was of a choice selection of the roughest blackguards in England, was very striking.

Many of these knew who he was, and were very glad to see him, but only one of the bookmakers secured his patronage. The fact was, Master Richard

had but one five-pound note to lay—he had been saving up his pocket-money for weeks for this very purpose, and he took ten to one about an outsider, "Don Sebastian"—a name I shall remember when all other historical knowledge has departed from me—not because he knew anything of the horse, but because the longest odds were laid against him.

I didn't like the look of the "gentleman sportsman" who took custody of that five-pound note, but Richard (who had never seen him before) assured me, with his usual confidence, that he was "straight as a die" and "as honest as the day."

The race excited me exceedingly; Richard had lent me a field-glass (for everything he had was in duplicate, if not triplicate), and I watched the progress of that running rainbow with a beating heart. At first Yellow Cap (the Don) seemed completely out of it, the last of all, but presently he began to creep up, and as they drew near the winning-post, shouts of "Yellow Cap wins!" "Yellow Cap wins!" rent the air. He did win by a head, and with a well-pleased flush on my face at my friend's marvellous good fortune, I turned to congratulate him. He was gone. The tumult and confusion were excessive, but looking towards the exit-gate I just caught a glimpse of the bookmaker passing rapidly through it, and then of Richard in pursuit of him.

A stout young farmer, whom I knew, was standing

behind me, and in a few hurried words I told him what had happened. "Come with me," he said, and off we ran, as though we had been entered for the cup ourselves. The other two were already a field ahead, and far away from the course; but fast as the book-maker ran, the delicate Richard had come up with him. I could imagine how pumped he was, but the idea of having been swindled by this scoundrel, who was running off with his five-pound note, as well as with the fifty pounds he owed him, had no doubt lent him wings. It could not, however, lend him strength, nor teach him the art of self-defence, and after a few moments, passed doubtless in polite request and blunt refusal, we saw the miscreant strike out from the shoulder and Richard go down.

The time thus lost, however, short-lived as was the combat, was fatal to the victor. There were few better runners in Dalton than my companion and myself, and we gained on the bookmaker (who had probably trained on gin and bad tobacco) hand over hand. As we drew near him he turned round and inquired, with many expletives, made half inarticulate by want of breath, what we wanted with a gentleman engaged on his own private affairs.

"Well," I said, for as I could trust my agricultural friend with the more practical measures that were likely to follow I thought it only fair that I should do the talking, "we want first the five-pound note which that young gentleman (whom you have just knocked down)

entrusted to your care, and then the fifty pounds you have lost to him."

He called Heaven to witness that he had never made a bet in his life with any young gentleman; but that, having been molested, he believed by a footpad, as he was returning home to his family, he had been compelled to defend himself.

"I heard you make the bet, and saw you take the money," I remarked with confidence.

"That's good enough," said the farmer. "Now if you don't shell out that money this instant, I'll have you back in the ring in a brace of shakes and tell them what has happened. Last year they tore a welsher pretty nigh to pieces, and this year (if you don't 'part') they'll do it quite."

The bookmaker turned livid—I never saw a man in such a funk in my life—and produced a greasy pocket-book, out of which he took Richard's banknote, and ten quite new ones, and I noticed there were more left (so that poverty was not his excuse for fraud).

"Let me look at 'em against the sun," said the farmer, "to see as the water-mark is all right."

This was a precaution I should never have thought of, and it gave me for the first time a sense of the great intelligence of my father's parishioner.

"Yes; they're all correct. And now you may go, but if ever you show your face again on Southick (Southwick) racecourse it will be the worse for you."

He slunk away, and we returned to Richard, who

was sitting on the ground, looking at his nose, which was bleeding, and had attained vast dimensions.

"Did you get the money?" were his first words, which I thought very characteristic.

"Yes, there it is, squire—ten fivers and your own note."

"Very good; I should never have seen a shilling of it but for you and Charley, so we will just divide it into three shares."

The farmer said "No," but eventually took his £16 13s. 4d., and quite right too. Of course I did not take Richard's money, but he afterwards bought me a rifle with it, which I could not refuse. The farmer, as may well be imagined, could be trusted to say nothing of our adventure; but it was impossible to hide Richard's nose. He was far too honest a fellow to tell a lie about it, and the whole story came out. His father was dreadfully shocked at it, and Lady Jane in despair—the one about his gambling propensities, and the other about his nose; she thought if the injury did not prove fatal he would be disfigured for life.

He was well in a week, but the circumstances had the gravest consequences. It was decided that something must be done with the heir of the Luscombes to wean him from low company (this was not me, but grooms and racing people), but even this predilection was ascribed in part to his fragile constitution. A fashionable physician came down from London to consider the case. He could not quite be brought to the

point desired by Lady Jane, to lay Richard's love of gambling at the door of the delicacy of his lungs; but he was brought very near it. The young fellow, his "opinion" was, had been brought up too much like a hot-house flower; his tastes were what they were chiefly because he had had no opportunities of forming better ones; with improved strength his moral nature would become more elevated. That he was truthful was a great source of satisfaction (this was with reference to his distinct refusal to give up gambling to please anybody) and a most wholesome physical sign. "My recommendation is that he should be temporarily removed from his present dull surroundings; there is not scope in them for his mind; he should be sent abroad for a month or two with his tutor. That will do him a world of good."

If it was not very good advice, it was probably quite as judicious as other "opinions" for which a hundred and fifty guineas have been cheerfully paid. It was at all events a great comfort to hear that there was nothing constitutionally wrong with "dearest Richard," and that he only wanted a tonic for mind and body. The doctor's verdict was accepted by both parents, but there was an insurmountable obstacle to its being carried into effect in Master Richard himself. My father could not leave his parish and his family, and with no other tutor could the young gentleman be induced to go.

Now, it happened that the butler at the Court, John Maitland, who, as is often the case in such households,

had the gravity and dignity of a bishop, was so fortunate as to be a favourite both with the old folks and the young one. He really was a superior person, and not only "honest as the day" in Richard's eyes (which, as we have seen, was not a guarantee of straightforwardness), but in those of everyone else. He had been born in the village; had been page to Mr. Luscombe's father, and had lived more than fifty years at the Court. The relations between master and servant were feudal, mingled with the more modern attachment that comes of good service properly appreciated. He thought the Luscombes, if not the only old family in the world, the best, and worshipped—though in a dignified and ecclesiastical manner—the ground trodden on both by the squire and Master Richard. My own impression was that under pretence of giving way to the latter he played into the parental hands; but as this was certainly for my young friend's good, I never communicated my suspicions to him. Maitland, at all events, had more influence over him than any man except my father. Still, it astonished us all not a little, notwithstanding the high opinion we entertained of him, when we heard that the butler was to be entrusted with the guardianship of Richard abroad. Such a thing could not have happened in any other family, but so it was arranged; and partly as valet, partly as confidential companion and treasurer, Maitland started with his young master on his travels.

These were to last for not less than six months, and Italy, because of its warm climate, was the country to

which they were bound. That it would do the young fellow good, both moral and physical, we all hoped; but my father had his doubts. He feared that Maitland's influence over his companion would wane when away from the Court; but it never entered into his mind that he would willingly permit of any wrongdoing, and still less that the man would himself succumb to any temptation that involved dishonesty.

They travelled by easy stages; though they used the railway, of course, they did so only for a few hours a day, and got out and remained at places of interest. Richard was very amenable, and indeed showed no desire for dissipation; his one weakness—that of having a "spec"—had no opportunity of being gratified, and Maitland wrote home the most gratifying letters, not only respecting the behaviour of his charge, but of the improvement in his health. As they drew nearer to Italy, Richard observed one day that he should spend a day or two at Monte Carlo. Maitland had never heard of the place or of its peculiar attractions; and "Master Richard" only told him that it was very picturesque. The horror of the faithful retainer may therefore be imagined when he found that it was a gambling resort.

He could not prevent his young master frequenting the tables, and though he kept the purse, with the exception of a few pounds, and would certainly have stood between him and ruin, he could not prevent his winning. Richard had the luck, and more, that proverbially attends

young people—he had the luck of the devil; his few napoleons swelled to a great many on the very first day, and he was in the seventh heaven of happiness. The next day and the next he won largely—immensely: in vain Maitland threatened to write to his father, and even to leave him.

"All right," replied the reckless youth. "You may do as you like; even if the governor disinherits me I can make my fortune by stopping here: and as to leaving me, go by all means; I shall get on very well with a French valet."

It was dreadful.

Richard grew happier and happier every day, as the golden flood flowed in upon him; but also extremely hectic. He passed the whole day at the tables, and the want of air and exercise, and, still more, the intense excitement which possessed him, began to have the most serious effect. That prescription of "seeing the world," and "escaping from his dull surroundings," was having a very different result from what had been expected. "The paths of glory lead but to the grave;" the young Englishman and his luck were the talk of all Monte Carlo, and he enjoyed his notoriety very much; but, as the poor butler plaintively observed, what was the good of that when Master Richard was "killing hisself?"

How the news was received at the Court I had no means of judging, for the squire kept a rigid silence, except that he had long conferences with my father;

and Lady Jane kept her room; it was indeed a very sore subject. The squire wanted to start for Monte Carlo at once; but he was singularly insular, detested travel, and in truth was very unfit for such a "cutting-out expedition" as was contemplated. He waited, half out of his mind with anxiety, but in hopes of a better report: what he hoped for was that luck would turn, and Richard lose every shilling.

The very reverse of this, however, took place: Richard won more and more. He would come home to his hotel in the evening with a porter carrying his gains. His portmanteau was full of napoleons. It was characteristic of him that he never thought of banking it. One evening he came in with very bright eyes, but a most shrunken and cadaverous face.

"This has been my best day of all, Johnny," he said. "See, I have won two thousand pounds; and you shall have a hundred of it."

But Maitland refused to have anything to do with such ill-gotten gains, for which, too, his young master was sacrificing his health, and perhaps his life. Still—though this did not strike Richard till afterwards—he could not help regarding the great heap of gold with considerable interest. Added to the lad's previous gains, the amount was now very large indeed—more than five thousand pounds.

"I should really think, Master Richard, as you had now won enough."

"Enough? Certainly not. I have not broken the

bank yet. I mean to do that before I've done with it, Johnny."

"That will be after you've killed yourself," said honest John.

"Well, then I shall die *rich,*" was the reckless rejoinder.

Richard, who was too exhausted for repose, tossed and tumbled on his bed for hours, and eventually dropped into a heavy slumber, and slept far into the next morning. He awoke feeling very unwell, but his chief anxiety was lest he should miss the opening of the tables; he was always the first to begin. He rang his bell violently for Maitland. There was no reply, and when he rang again, one of the hotel servants came up.

"Where is my man?" he inquired.

"Monsieur's manservant took monsieur's luggage to the railway-station; he is gone by the early train to Turin."

"Gone to Turin with my luggage?"

"Yes, with the two portmanteaus—very heavy ones."

Richard got out of bed, and dragged his weary limbs into the dressing-room, an inner apartment where the portmanteaus were kept for safety. They were both gone.

"What train did the scoundrel go by? Where is my watch? Why, the villain has taken that too! Send for the police! No; there is no time to be lost—send a telegram. Why, he has not even left me enough money to pay a telegram!"

All his small change was gone. Honest John had taken everything; he had not left his young master a single sixpence. At this revelation of the state of affairs, poor Richard, weakened as he was by his long excitement, threw himself on the bed and burst into tears. The attendant, to whom, as usual, he had been liberal, was affected by an emotion so strange in an Englishman.

"Monsieur must not fret; the thief will be caught and the money restored. It would be well, perhaps, to tell the maître d'hôtel."

The master of the hotel appeared with a very grave face. He was desolated to hear of the misfortune that had befallen his young guest. Perhaps there was not quite so much taken as had been reported.

"I tell you it's all gone; more than £5,000, and my watch and chain; I have not half a franc in my possession."

"That is unfortunate indeed," said the maître d'hôtel, looking graver than ever, "because there is my bill to settle."

"Oh, hang your bill!" cried Richard. "*That* will be all right. I must telegraph to my father at once."

"But how is monsieur to telegraph if he has no money?"

It was probably the first time in his life that the young fellow had ever understood how inconvenient a thing is poverty. What also amazed him beyond measure was the man's manner; yesterday, and all other

days, it had been polite to obsequiousness; now it was dry almost to insolence. It seemed indeed to imply some doubt of the bonâ-fides of his guest—that he might not, in short, be much better than honest John himself, of whom he was possibly the confederate; that the whole story was a trumped-up one to account for the inability to meet his bill. As to his having won largely at the tables, that might be true enough; but he also might have lost it all, and more with it: money changes hands at Monte Carlo very rapidly.

In the end, however, and not without much objection, the landlord advanced a sufficient sum to enable Richard to telegraph home. He also permitted him to stay on at the hotel, stipulating, however, that he should call for no wine, nor indulge in anything expensive—a humiliating arrangement enough, but not so much so as the terms of another proviso, that he was never to enter the gambling saloon or go beyond the public gardens. Even there he was under surveillance, and it was, in short, quite clear that he was suspected of an intention to run away without paying his bill—perhaps even of joining his "confederate", Mr. John Maitland.

The only thing that comforted Richard was the conviction that he should have a remittance from his father in a few hours; but nothing of the sort, not even a telegram, arrived. Day after day went by, and the young fellow was in despair; he felt like a pariah, for he had been so occupied with the tables that he had made no friends; and his few acquaintances looked as-

kance at him, as being under a cloud with the precise nature of which they were unacquainted. Friendless and penniless in a foreign land, his spirit was utterly broken, and he began to understand what a fool he had made of himself; especially how ungratefully he had behaved to his father, without whom it was not so easy to "get on," it appeared, as he had imagined. He saw, too, the evil of his conduct in having thrust a temptation in the way of honest John too great to be resisted. The police could hear no news of him, and indeed seemed very incredulous with respect to Richard's account of the matter.

On the fourth day Richard received a letter from his father of the gravest kind, though expressed in the most affectionate terms. He hardly alluded to the immediate misfortune that had happened to him, but spoke of the anxiety and alarm which his conduct had caused his mother and himself. "I enclose you a cheque," he wrote, "just sufficient to comfortably bring you home and pay your hotel bill, and exceedingly regret that I cannot trust my son with more—lest he should risk it in a way that gives his mother and myself more distress of mind than I can express."

Richard's heart was touched, as it well might have been; though, perhaps, the condition of mind in which his father's communication found him had something to do with it. By that night's mail he despatched a letter home which gave the greatest delight at the Court, and also at the Vicarage, for Mr. Luscombe, full of pride

and joy, brought it to my father to read. "I have been very foolish, sir, and very wicked," it ran. "I believe I should have been dead by this time had not Maitland stolen my money (so that I have no reason to feel very angry with him), and deprived me of the means of suicide. I give you my word of honour that I will never gamble again."

Lady Jane sent a telegram to meet Mr. Richard in Paris to say what a dear, good boy he was, and how happy he had made her. This did not surprise him, but what did astonish him very much on arriving at the Court was that John Maitland opened the door for him.

"Why, you old scoundrel!"

"Yes, sir, I know; I'm a thief and all that, but I did it for the best; I did, indeed."

Though the fatted calf was killed for Master Richard, he had by no means returned like the Prodigal Son. On the contrary, he had sent home a remittance, as it were, by the butler of more than £5,000. The whole plot had been devised by honest John as the only method of extricating Master Richard from that Monte Carlo spider's web, and had been carried out by the help of the maître d'hôtel, with the squire's approval. And to do the young fellow justice, he never resented the trick that had been played upon him.

Richard was not sent abroad again, but to Cambridge, where eventually he took a fourth class (poll) degree; and Lady Jane was as proud of it as if he had

been senior wrangler. He kept his word, in spite of all temptations to the contrary, and never touched a card, a circumstance which drove him to take a fair amount of exercise, and, in consequence, he steadily improved in health. He was sometimes chaffed by his companions for his abstinence from play. They should have thought he was the last man to be afraid of losing his money.

"You are right, so far," he would answer drily; "but the fact is, I have had enough of winning."

To which they would reply:

"Oh yes, we dare say," an elliptical expression which conveyed disbelief.

He never told them the story of his Monte Carlo experiences; but in the vacations he would often talk to honest John about them. We may be sure that that faithful retainer did not go unrewarded for his fraudulent act.

A CLERK'S CONSCIENCE.

I.

I WAS once a "junior" in the employment of that well-known and extensive firm, Apsley, Wellesley and Co., of Cornhill. The senior partner was a friend of my father, which gave me a better position than I should otherwise have occupied; but I may say, without vanity, that I was well worth my "salt," or at all events my salary, which was by no means a large one. I did not shirk my duties, as it was the fashion of some of my fellow-clerks to do, and showed myself anxious to "get on." Of course there are different ways of doing this, but when it is done without priggism, and, especially, not at the expense of others, I have a conviction that it generally succeeds. In a long commercial life, I have noticed that the man who wastes his time and that of his master, who is the last to reach the office, and the first to go away, and who flattens his nose against the window while he is there, instead of sticking to his work, is apt to stick to the stool where he first finds himself, and to rise no higher; while the man who does his duty without grudging, and takes some interest in

the firm's affairs, moves up, and if he doesn't marry his master's daughter and become Lord Mayor of London, in the old story-book fashion, still reaps his reward. The grumbler of mature years is almost always, in youth, the idler, and the gentleman who is always "unlucky" has something beside Misfortune to account for it, though he lays all the blame upon that lady.

Nevertheless, even at one-and-twenty, I was neither so vain nor so foolish as to set down old Apsley's favour to me to my own merits. He had taken me into his employment to oblige his old friend, very likely by no means willingly, and he was no doubt agreeably surprised to find me useful to him. "Business is business," and as a general rule (as I have since found, myself) it is better not to let sentimental considerations interfere with it, if you can help it—which, however, is a pretty large "if." At all events, our senior partner was as civil to his young clerk as was compatible with the great gulf between us, and his carefulness to give no cause of jealousy to others. He even knew where I lodged—itself an immense stretch of interest in any member of the firm as regarded their subordinates—and had been so good as to inquire on one occasion whether I was comfortably located. Such affability won my heart, and unless I had been offered a considerable rise in salary, I would not have left his employment to serve anybody. Still, it did astonish me when a footman called at my lodging one evening with a note from Mr. Apsley, requesting me, "if convenient," to come to

see him at once at his private residence. This was situated in a fashionable square, and though I saw little of it that night except the old gentleman's study, or snuggery, whither he descended for the interview, I was considerably impressed with its grandeur. What he wanted me for was to take a note upon some important business matter to our Mr. Jones, the manager, that night.

"I don't know where he lives," he said, "or I would not have troubled you, Ackers."

I replied, very truthfully, that the trouble was a pleasure (for it is always a good thing to be able to oblige one's chief), and that though I only knew that Mr. Jones lived somewhere near Harton, a suburban station, I would find him if he was above ground.

In two minutes I was on my way to the railway, and caught the first train to the place in question. Though the station was a comparatively small one, I foresaw some difficulty in finding the manager, who probably lived in a modest way (though he had what seemed to me a gigantic salary of £800 a year), for he was a very modest, retiring sort of man, and Jones is not an uncommon name. However, I made my application to the station-master directly I got out.

"Do you happen to know where a Mr. Jones lives in this neighbourhood?"

"Mr. Jones," he replied; "do you mean Squire Jones?"

"No," I said, "that is not the gentleman; I want Mr. Jones of Cornhill."

The station-master shook his head, as though in deprecation of all commercial persons; he said he was not acquainted with any person of that name except "the squire." There was nothing for it but to take a fly to Harton Hall, where it seemed this great man lived. If it was not exactly "a hall," after the country, or rather "county" pattern, it was very superior to any "villa residence." We were admitted by a lodge-keeper through gilded iron gates which opened upon park-like and quite extensive grounds. The longer I took in driving through them the more certain I felt that I was on a fool's errand, and the sight of the mansion itself convinced me of it.

It was of great size, and on that summer night the unshuttered windows of the lower rooms emitted a blaze of light; there was evidently a dinner-party, or perhaps even a ball going on. I was quite ashamed of myself and my errand when my humble vehicle drew up at the stately portico, and a footman attired like a field-marshal answered the summons of the front-door bell.

"Does Mr. Jones live here?" I inquired hesitatingly; "Mr. Jones of Apsley, Wellesley and Co.?"

"Yes, sir."

You might have knocked me down with a feather: I should have been only a little more surprised to hear that this was the country residence of my fellow-clerk, Jack Spriggins, who shared the parlour at my lodgings. Though myself almost penniless, I came of a good family, and knew the proportion of scales of living among

landed proprietors, but the splendour of that entrance-hall with its statues and pictures threw all I had seen elsewhere of the kind into the shade; in particular it struck me how very much grander it was than my employer's entrance-hall, in which I had stood but an hour ago.

I gave my card to the footman, and was ushered into a side-room, the fittings and furniture of which threw Mr. Apsley's "snuggery" completely into the shade. It was more like a boudoir than a room used for business purposes, though I recognised Mr. Jones's little black bag lying in one corner of it, and also his letter-case upon a marble table. In the few seconds that it took me to observe these things, there was a constant clatter of knives and forks, and hum of conversation from the dining-room, on the other side of the hall; it was evidently a very large dinner-party, yet the host did not hesitate to leave it on the instant that the servant brought him in my card. It seemed to me almost impossible that he could have been with me so soon, yet there he was, looking in his evening dress as I had never seen him before, but with a much greater change in him than that; the manager's face was ghastly pale; there was a dew upon it for which the warmth of the evening could hardly account, while the expression of his little gray eyes was anxious and perturbed to the last degree.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Ackers," he said, in a voice of unmistakable expectation and alarm. "What is it? Nothing wrong, I hope, with Mr. Apsley?"

I suppose it was my slight connection with the senior partner that suggested this apprehension, for it would have been more natural, as it struck me, for him to say, "nothing wrong at the office."

"I cannot say, sir," I replied; "but Mr. Apsley sent me over with this letter to you, which he said was of extreme importance."

The manager took the letter, and tore it open with a haste I had never seen him use; he was a very slow, methodical man, and took everything in general very quietly. Directly he had read the letter his ordinary manner returned to him.

"There is nothing here requiring such immediate haste, I think, but, of course, tell Mr. Apsley it shall be attended to at once. Mr.—that is, the gentleman he alludes to—shall hear from me by to-night's post. I have a few friends to dinner, Mr. Ackers, though, as you are not in evening dress, you may not care to join them; but you must, at all events, have a glass of wine."

This I declined, and he did not press it; though perfectly civil, indeed much more conciliatory in his manner than I had ever known him to be, for it was always cold and reserved, he was obviously glad to get rid of me. As a host detained from his guests this was not to be wondered at; but the impression it left upon me was very unpleasant.

As I passed into the hall the ladies were leaving the dining-room; six or eight of them, all beautifully

dressed, trooped up the staircase without perceiving our presence, but the last one, the lady of the house, caught sight of us, and looked surprised. She was a very handsome woman, half a head taller, and considerably larger than Mr. Jones, and her voice, though musical enough, had a touch of imperiousness in it, as she inquired what was detaining him.

"My young friend, Mr. Ackers," he explained, "has been so good as to bring me an important letter from Cornhill."

"Oh, the office," she answered contemptuously, and without taking the least notice of her husband's introduction, she followed her guests up the stairs.

As I drove away to the station, it seemed to me like awakening from a sort of splendid nightmare; was it possible that Squire Jones could really be one with our most respectable but very unassuming manager? Could that virago in lace and satin be his wife?

II.

Looking back on that strange experience from my present standpoint, I am conscious that the lady's behaviour affected my view of Mr. Jones's position injuriously. My suspicions of him would have been aroused in any case, but the insolence with which his helpmate had treated me made me jump to the conclusion that there was a screw loose somewhere. It was very illogical, for the lady's conduct had at least shown that she was

not afraid of me, or of any account I was likely to give of my visit to Harton, but I was too put out by it to draw conclusions of that kind. It was bad enough that people should be purse-proud who were really rich, but that the wife of a man with £800 a year, who was living at the rate of £8,000, should give herself airs was intolerable.

Of the reckless extravagance of our manager's mode of life there could, indeed, be no question, unless his wife had been an heiress, in which case it was to the last degree unlikely that she would have married Mr. Jones; but a much more painful suspicion had taken hold of me. I could not forget the consternation he had exhibited upon seeing me, his feverish anxiety to know the errand on which I had come, and his evident relief when the contents of Mr. Apsley's letter had informed him of it. That he expected something of a far graver nature I was convinced. As I sat in the railway carriage alone—in a first-class compartment, of course, as was only right when travelling on the business of the firm, which, of course, paid the "exes" —and reflected upon the whole situation, I felt that it was in truth a serious one. There was no question as to what it was my interest to do; when I presently saw Mr. Apsley—he had told me to call, no matter how late the hour, in order to assure him that his directions had been attended to—I might make a clean breast to him, not only of my late experiences, but of my suspicions. "What I tell you, sir," I might say, "I tell you

in confidence; but it is my conviction that there is something wrong with Mr. Jones."

Even if I had misjudged the manager, this would do me no harm, and if I was right I should have a claim upon the firm which they could hardly ignore. It was clear to me that was the most profitable course to take; but in what direction lay my duty? I had no regard for Mr. Jones whatever; indeed, I rather disliked him; he was less like a man in the office than a machine (though out of it it seemed he was "human" enough), and showed no sympathy for any of us. But was it my business to ruin him? The notion of telling tales "out of school" was hateful to me as to all young fellows of decent feeling; and, besides (though that was not so commendable), I had a notion that a firm which makes tens of thousands a year is in a position to take care of itself. I had not at that time that sympathy with well-to-do persons which, I am thankful to say, circumstances have since developed in me.

On the other hand, Mr. Apsley was not only my father's friend, but to a certain extent, and according to his lights (though they were rather dim ones), had been my friend. Was it right, entertaining such suspicions as I did, and which so nearly affected the well-being of the firm I served, that I should keep silence about them?

Some philosophers hold that conscience, properly consulted, is an unerring guide for conduct; but, per-

haps, from want of practice, I did not consult her properly; at all events, I was puzzled how to act. I think, if it had not been for Mrs. Jones, I should not have said a word about the matter. If there had been a Miss Jones at Harton Hall, of nice manners and appearance, I feel sure I should have been silent. Think of bringing misfortune, and perhaps disgrace, upon an innocent girl! Upon the whole I resolved to adopt a middle course. I would simply tell my story —more or less of it as circumstances should demand —without any comment of my own, and leave my employer to draw his own conclusions. It was not a very high-principled plan, perhaps—it was certainly a compromise; but I am writing of a thing that actually occurred, and have set down the conclusion I arrived at to its real motives. They might have been more high-principled, but I still think they were not base.

It was eleven o'clock when I reached Mr. Apsley's door. I was shown in, as before, to his study, and found him there, smoking a cigar; though evidently pleased to see me, he did not ask me to have one. If he had done so, matters might have turned out differently, perhaps. Geniality in an employer goes a great way, like a smile from royalty; but it was not in him.

"Well, you gave the manager my letter?" he inquired sharply.

"Yes, sir; he said the matter should be attended to to-night."

"That's well. You have been very expeditious, Mr.

Ackers; I suppose you had no difficulty in finding out Mr. Jones?"

It was evident he had no interest in the subject, and only mentioned it to avoid the discourtesy of dismissing me at once.

"No, sir, none at all; he was living, indeed, in the best house in the place."

"Ay, ay! He has a good house, has he? Any grounds about it?" Here he yawned.

"Yes, sir; indeed, the house stands almost in a park."

"Really! all these suburban places boast of something of the kind. Holland Park began it."

I saw that he was getting very wide of the mark; but this made it all the harder for me to tell my story with any significance at all.

"I should think it stood in not less than five acres of ground. It was called Harton Hall."

"You don't say so; well done, Jones!" Mr. Apsley seemed really amused. "I'll ask him to-morrow how they all are at the hall."

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said, "but I do hope you will not do that. It will make him think ill of me."

"To be sure, he may compare you to the spy that discovered the land flowing with milk and honey. And yet why should it not flow? Jones has been thirty years with us, and I dare say has had many good things put in his way. Why shouldn't he call his house a hall if he likes?"

"Why, indeed, sir, so far as I am concerned?" I replied dryly, for I was very much chagrined at being thus treated like a child. It was now quite clear to me that no hint—short of a direct statement of my suspicions—would have any effect upon Mr. Apsley's mind; and I was sincerely glad of it. The pendulum of my sympathies had swung round to Jones's side. My employer's manner had certainly not been encouraging; it was less so than ever after my last reply.

"It is growing late, and you must be tired, Mr. Ackers; will you have a glass of wine?"

I declined his offer as I had declined Mr. Jones's, for the hospitality of neither gentleman had been very pressing, and backed out of the room.

I felt much relieved that matters were thus ended; but though I doubt whether I should have taken my opportunity even if it had offered itself, I was conscious that the whole affair had somehow fizzled out. If I had denounced the manager, I should probably by this time have been agonized by remorse; if I had said nothing of the position in which I had found him, I should have been reproaching myself, no doubt, with disloyalty to my employers; but now that I had taken the middle course, it seemed something ridiculous, and, indeed, contemptible. When I got home and found Spriggins with his pipe, wakeful and inquisitive, I felt not the least temptation to tell him anything about "what old Apsley had sent for me about."

I said "it was a private matter," which made him

wild with curiosity, and my refusal to gratify it caused a quarrel between us. My expedition to Harton may have had its dramatic attractions, but from a social point of view it certainly did not seem to have been a success. The next morning when I saw our manager in his business coat totting up the accounts as usual, I could hardly believe him to be the "Squire Jones" I had called upon not twelve hours before. He made not the smallest allusion to my visit; nor did Mr. Apsley to the errand on which he had sent me.

There happened to be great excitement at the office that morning, consequent on the resignation of Mr. Roberts, the third clerk, who (lucky dog!) had "come in for money," and it whirled Spriggins away with it like the rest. He forgot all about our last night's quarrel and my injurious treatment of him.

The unwonted agitation of the previous evening had had its effects, I suppose, upon my nerves, for I had a splitting headache, which grew worse and worse; and upon that plea, which I do not remember to have ever used before, I obtained leave of absence from my immediate chief, and went home to bed. I slept for some hours, and on awaking, much refreshed, found Spriggins standing by my bedside.

"Sorry to disturb you, old fellow," he said, "but I am fairly bursting with intelligence" (he meant information; the other thing was incredible). "There's been such a scrimmage at the office as was never heard of. Jones has bolted!"

"Bolted? The manager? Then he's got away?"

"Well, yes, for the present; though I don't think the firm will be so gratified about that as you seem to be. However, he missed his tip this time as regards the swag——"

"Do, for Heaven's sake, speak English! What tip? What swag?"

"To be sure, you have been asleep, while I've been talking about nothing else for the last three hours. There are defalcations—£50,000, they say—extending over a long series of years; but there would have been £10,000 more gone—all negotiable securities—but for their opening the safe, where they were found neatly made up to go in his bag this very night: you remember his black bag?"

I nodded eagerly, but with a sinking sensation too; I knew more about Jones than Spriggins did; the catastrophe seemed to have something personal as well as shocking about it. As I sat up in bed, I saw the bag lying in the corner of that gorgeous room at Harton Hall; I heard the clatter of talk from the dining-room; I saw the ladies trailing their fine dresses up the stairs; and I heard once more Mrs. Jones's contemptuous voice saying, "Oh, from the office!"

"They found it out while he was at lunch, and the detectives sat in his room with the warrant for him, only he never came back. The old fellow smelt a rat, I suppose."

I think this highly probable. I think he read some-

thing he was looking for in my face that morning, and, coupling it with my unusual disappearance (for he had asked for me, it seemed) had decided as he sat over his chop at the eating-house that he had better be off at once. To take the bag away with him at that early hour would have brought suspicion, if suspicion there was, to a head immediately. He did not dare to risk it, and in his case the better part of valour had certainly been discretion; for five minutes of such valour would have cost him five years' penal servitude. He was never seen again in England.

Ten days afterwards or so I was summoned from my desk to the partner's parlour. It was not generally a pleasant invitation, but rather resembled what is called at Cambridge being "convened;" to a guilty conscience it meant something very serious, but though my conscience may be thought peculiar, it was not a guilty one.

There were four partners whom I scarcely knew by sight, and Mr. Apsley, who completed the quorum and was the speaker.

"Mr. Ackers, we have sent for you to congratulate you upon your conduct the other night with respect to our late manager. You showed yourself aware of what was due to one who had held a position of trust with us for many years, and also to your employers' interests. You said neither more nor less than you ought to have said. If nothing was wrong with him, you did him no harm; if there was anything amiss, you put us on

our guard. It is owing to you that certain very grievous losses incurred through this man's dishonesty, and of which we had had hitherto no clue, have not been very seriously increased. I am instructed by the firm to thank you" (here four most respectable heads bowed to me affably). "It is very unusual to find so young a man endowed with such discretion. You will take Mr. Roberts' place as third clerk in this establishment. Good-morning."

It was a very pleasant quarter of an hour. What I have often thought of since was the astuteness with which that excellent old gentleman concealed from me that night the suspicions which I myself had awakened. He, of course, perceived the necessity of not arousing those of Mr. Jones, by communicating them to me. Another thing which has always puzzled me is my own behaviour on that occasion; my conscience was clearly commendable, since its workings were so well rewarded; but how very near it was to going wrong in, so to speak, both ways!

It strikes me as having been more professional than moral or philosophical—what we may call a clerk's conscience, though scarcely that of a clerk in holy orders.

AUNT SUE'S PANIC.

Did you ever see a dwelling-house the outside of which evokes such notes of admiration as "How charming!" "How sweetly pretty!" "How picturesque!" from every passer-by, that is not in its interior arrangements the very reverse of charming? I have lived in a cottage smothered in roses, swathed in jessamine, and with honeysuckle tapping at every window-pane on the upper floor, with a gabled porch that the wistaria has made a bower of blossom, and the *tout ensemble* of which has caused many a travelling artist to pause upon his way, and transfer it to canvas; but while I have resided in that earthly paradise, I have never known what comfort is. Nay, I have been a guest in lordly mansions, "royal, rich, and wide," to which sightseers come upon appointed days, and are shown through "the state apartments" by a stately housekeeper, who exhibits to their wide-eyed curiosity the room where his Sacred Majesty, the First Charles, pillowed his head while it was yet upon his shoulders, and the apartment where Queen

Bess might have been seen by early zephyrs without her ruff—mansions where eighty beds are made up on occasion, and every visitor sticks his card outside his door, so that, in case of fire, as I suppose, it may be known exactly who is to be succoured first, according to his rank and station—where the list of guests is printed in the hall, and in every room hangs up a "notice" of the unalterable hours for meals and prayers. Pictures of "interiors" of such dwellings are to be seen in every great collection, labelled "The Corridor at Coucy Castle," "The Great Staircase," "The Private Chapel" (with its Grinling Gibbons carvings), and perhaps even "The Haunted Chamber." The picturesqueness of these spots is as patent as is their grandeur, but their excessive inconvenience is even more undeniable than either. The latticed windows do not open wide enough; the oaken doors do not thoroughly close; the tapestried walls are mouldy and insect-riddled, and the whole atmosphere is stuffy and stifling. To be lord of such a residence is to be king of a county, and gives one a thousand privileges; but the home comforts of his lordship's steward at Victoria Villa, Newtown (an erection about as picturesque as the parish workhouse), are infinitely greater. He has at least fresh air and abundance of light, which at Coucy Castle are unattainable. And what is true of dwelling-houses is true, though in a less degree, of whole localities: the picturesqueness of them is always in inverse proportion to the convenience. It seems, indeed, well-nigh impossible

to attain both advantages. The most beautiful spot in England is, for example, Clovelly, in North Devon, made familiar to every reader by Kingsley's "Westward Ho." The view afforded from the village is not extensive, but it includes almost every element of natural beauty. On the west, the sea, down to which its single street descends so steeply that no wheeled conveyance, nor even horses' hoofs, may traverse it, and a small but strongly built harbour, where the fishing-boats toss and tumble, or lie stranded on their sides, according as the tide is in or out. On the north and east, "wood overhanging wood, like cloud on cloud," and crowding to the cliff-tops, against whose bases the Atlantic wave for ever beats and foams. Nothing but these objects—which for beauty, indeed, are all-sufficient—is to be seen by those who sojourn in Clovelly: these and a little strip of sky. The houses are too near their opposite neighbours to admit of more extensive vision. A noble park, however, stretches to southward; and beyond it, headland after headland, till the last of England's soil yields to the sea, and the knowledge of their proximity seems to fill up the measure of delight to those who gaze and gloat upon the present treasures. It is fair here, surpassing fair, but would be fair there also. There is no apprehension of overstepping the barrier of home beauties, and coming upon anything barren.

The houses in this little town are themselves most picturesque and pleasant—to the eye, at least; and each of them, if not from porch or window, still from some

crack or cranny familiar to its inmates, commands the field in which all tenants of the place are labourers—the ocean. Whatever little coign and vantage-ground of space there is beyond what is occupied by their dwellings and the narrow street, is filled with flowers; but in the centre of the village, at the beginning of the winding steps that lead down to the harbour, there is a vacant spot, in which is placed a long low seat, where all that have toiled up the steps may stop and rest, and where, in the calm eves, when toil is done, men come and sit, while the moon mounts the sky, and pours her splendour over wood and wave. The village dwellings are of the humblest kind; and even the little inn which lords it over them, as being twice the size of any of its neighbours, is such as the fashionable, or even commercial, traveller may deem but a sorry resting-place: to others, however, of a more imaginative type, it will afford a richer accommodation than many a so-called "hotel." Its little rooms are furnished with rare china and curious ornaments, "picked up" by the Clovelly men (who are all sailors) in many a distant land; and its fare, if plain, is of the best: the thickest cream, the freshest eggs, fish straight from the net, and such a store of jams, home-made, as makes the mouth water with the remembrance of them.

And yet in this earthly paradise the trail of the serpent is over all, in a certain "ancient and fish-like smell," which pervades the whole lovely scene, and dis-

tracts one's thoughts from its marvellous beauty. The ocean-breeze itself, as it comes up the woody cleft, is often tainted by it, and by the time it reaches one, speaks of the finny denizens of the pathless deep rather than of the deep itself, with its briny freshness and cool cavernous cells. When there is no breeze, and the noonday sun beats down on the quaint village, which, notwithstanding its narrowness and the shade of the environing woods, it does with pitiless force, the case is greatly worse. The unhappy visitor likens himself to one in a hot-bed, and a hot-bed of no very savoury materials.

"Good heavens!" said I to my nephew, Frank Hotham, the artist, as we sat together at the window of the little inn, during such a noonday as I have described, glutting the eye indeed with a noble feast, but much at the expense of our olfactory organs—"Good heavens! suppose any epidemic was to break out in this Eden here, not a soul would escape it!"

It was said without reflection, for Frank had his young wife and only child with him; whereas I, an old maid with no "ties," had but my own safety to look to, and directly I had uttered the remark, I regretted it.

"By Jove!" said he, with sudden nervousness, "I never thought of that, Aunt Sue; and there's not a doctor within five miles, I am told. Not that a doctor would avail one much, shut up in this cloven ravine

without a breath of air. And there's small-pox about too—isn't there?"

I hastened to say that I had never heard as much, as indeed I had not. If Frank had done so, the news had probably "gone in at one ear and out at another" with him, as most things did which were not connected with his "art," as he called it. He was a really excellent landscape painter, but his devotion to his profession was a very serious nuisance to those who had to listen to his dissertations upon it. It was necessary not only to admire what he admired, but for the same identical reasons; and it was even still more obligatory to despise what he despised. If lawyers talked of law, authors of literature, or soldiers of war, in the same vague yet dogmatic style in which painters speak of painting, conversation would become impossible. Frank seldom escaped from his "shop," and compelled you to take his goods whether you would or not; but when he did escape, he was charming. Lucy and he were the handsomest young couple I have ever seen, and were devoted to one another, and to Baba. Baba was their little boy, just four years old, and their idol. I think they would have allowed, too, that he had a third worshipper in Aunt Sue. He always accompanied us in our excursions, and made the very prettiest figure in the "foreground" for his father's pictures conceivable. At home, too, on a wet day, he was quite a little treasure in this way; for he would sit or stand as still as a mouse while he was being "worked in" on the canvas. A lay-figure

such as painters use costs thirty pounds, which was beyond Frank's slender purse, so that he was always glad to get a sitter—a post which was no sinecure to him who filled it. Even Aunt Sue was pressed into the service occasionally, and then it was: "Steady, steady—Don't blink your eyes so much—The right arm a little straighter—Bend more to the right—Throw a little pleasanter expression into the mouth, if you please—Thank you."

My brother, the rector, was a welcome guest with his artist son, but always averred that this was on account of his own venerable appearance: "You can't get a lay-figure, my boy, so you must put up with a clerical one." They had both a very pleasant wit; though, since Lucy and I were sometimes unable to "see the joke," we were wont to describe it as too subtle. For instance, on a certain excursion of ours on the day previous to that on which this little story begins, we passed through a seaside village where the coastguard station was a very commodious building, and the house where the rector lived was by comparison a very humble one. "There!" cried Frank; "that proves what we have often heard, that 'Prevention is better than cure.'" It took us some time to remember that the coastguard is also called "The Preventive Service," and a church-living "A cure of souls"; and by the time we had found it out, Frank had made another joke. Our very dulness, however, was the occasion of mirth with us, and when we laughed that set Baba off, so that I don't think there

was a merrier party in North Devon that summer than we four. It was all the sadder for me when the blow suddenly fell upon us, of which I alone was conscious, but which threatened to cloud all this brightness in the shadow of death.

The day, as I have said, was hot and steamy; but in the evening the air became delightful, and we all went down as usual to enjoy it upon the breakwater of the little harbour. Even then there was not a breath of wind, and though the tide was up, not a single one of all the fishing-vessels had yet returned; we saw the straggling fleet making their way home indeed, but at a long distance off, and they seemed to get no nearer; the broad blue sea was flecked with their white sails as the sky is sometimes dotted by lines of wild geese clanging to their homes; only in this case there was no noise. The flowing wave sighed faintly as it reached the stone beneath us, like some exhausted swimmer who gains the shore with his last gasp. The tiny flag upon the roof-top above us could not flap, but hung heavily about its staff. There were no other persons about the harbour but ourselves, but the witchery of the scene stilled our talk, and little Baba's prattle was the only sound that broke the silence of sea or shore. After awhile it became the child's bedtime, and Lucy rose to accompany him to the inn. As I expressed my intention of remaining, Frank kindly offered to stay with me, but I knew how great were the attractions for him of seeing Baba in his bath and at his prayers, so I would

not permit him to do so. "Clovelly is a very queer place," said I, "and its sailors are very enterprising; but I don't think that anybody—even in Clovelly—will think of running away with your Aunt Sue." And so I was left alone.

In that still summer night, with the quiet stars shining above me, and below me—for the great deep was like a mirror—an old woman like myself, you may say, reader, might have occupied her thoughts to better purpose; but instead of reflecting upon the transitoriness of life, and my latter end, I confess, they were principally fixed upon a certain picnic that was to take place upon the morrow. Our dear Lucy, always delicate, like her darling child, was just then in an interesting condition—a "little stranger," whom poor Frank's uncertain income rendered by no means "welcome," was expected in the course of a few months—and it was my wish to save her from any kind of trouble, so that I took all the details of housekeeping, when we were in lodgings, off her shoulders. And even at the inn, it was necessary to forecast a little, when any exodus, such as the one in contemplation, had been resolved upon. I had bespoken some cold meat and potted trout; but I was bent, if possible, on securing some fruit, principally on the child's account, and as a surprise. Except to housekeepers, and those upon a very moderate scale, such a subject for cogitation will doubtless appear contemptible, and I only mention it to show how far, at least, my meditations were from being morbid or sombre, and hence the

more forcibly to contrast my state of mind with what it became within one short hour afterwards.

"In the midst of life," it is written, "we are in death;" and also in the midst of our comfortable common-places, the ordinary jog-trot life of from day to day, we are in the midst of the most terrible catastrophes, such as, when we read of their happening to others, we dismiss with a "Dear me, how sad!" but which, when they happen to ourselves, turn our smooth life inside out, and reveal its seams and roughness with pitiless hand.

Well, I had settled in my own mind about the fruit, and also which cushion of the sofa in our little sitting-room would suit best to prop dear Lucy's back in the somewhat jolting carriage which we had engaged for the morrow, and was slowly toiling up the steps to the inn, when this occurred.

Half-way up the steps there is an ancient archway occupied as a dwelling-house; here I stopped to gather breath for the remainder of the ascent; it was almost dark by this time, and standing in the shadow of the arch, I was quite invisible to any passer-by who should not absolutely touch me. I had scarcely reached this resting-place, when my ear was struck by the faint and suppressed sobs of a woman. She was evidently in some room on the other side of the wall against which I leaned, and but for it, I could have touched her with my hand.

"Dead, dead, dead!" she moaned. "Oh, what shall we do without our bread-winner?"

I was about to knock at the cottage door, to see if I could be of any sort of comfort to this poor bereaved creature, when I heard the step of a man coming down the hill, so unsteady that I could not but conclude that he was in liquor. Such an occurrence is not an unexampled one in any fishing-village, but I have a particular horror of a drunken person, and therefore shrank quickly back into my corner. The man came on, and stopped at the very door at which I had been about to knock.

"In tears! Why, what's the matter, lass?" I heard him say.

"Matter enough, man," returned she, in heartrending tones: "our Polly's dead;" and once more she burst into sobs.

"Dead?" repeated he, in a dull dazed way, as though he could not picture to himself the dread reality. "Don't say she's dead!"

"Hush! Don't speak so loud, man. Yes; she is dead, and dead of——"

And here she appeared to whisper something in his ear.

Great Heaven! what was it that the poor woman had died of, that those two should be so secret about it? A terrible conviction flashed upon me that the hideous disease of which Frank and I had spoken that

very morning had actually broken out in the place of all others where we had most cause to fear it.

"You will not breathe a word about it, Alec," continued the sobbing voice. "It is bad enough as it is; but if it comes to be known how she came by her end, it will be even worse."

For an instant it struck me that the poor creature whose death they were discussing had been put out of the world by foul play; and such is the selfishness of human nature (though, to do me justice, the thankfulness would not have been on my own account), that I should have been almost thankful for such a solution of the affair. The next few words, however, convinced me of my mistake.

"Can I see her?" inquired the man gravely, his fuddled brains appearing to have become cleared a little by the greatness of his loss. "If I had thought her to have been so bad, I would not have gone up street to the alehouse."

"You couldn't have saved her, Alec; nought could have saved her. And nought but harm could come now of going to look at her. The only thing to be done is to keep all quiet. She is a heavy loss to us and the bairns; but we shall be wellnigh ruined if the inn folks should be frightened away from us."

The inn folks! Here was a family who evidently derived their living from the customers at the inn. The man perhaps had a boat for hire, the woman doubtless took in the washing of the visitors—*our* washing amongst

others! Whether it was small-pox or scarlet fever, we were equally doomed if any article was used from that cottage, and I silently resolved that it should not be used. The things from the wash, the landlady had informed me, would be sent home towards the end of the week, and in the meantime I would devise some excuse for leaving Clovelly without, if possible, giving any shock to poor Lucy.

"But how are we to help the inn-folks and everyone else from knowing it?" urged the man. "We must get the certificate——"

"Whist! Come in. I've a plan to manage that"—then the door closed behind him, and I heard the steps of both of them ascending some rickety stairs to the upper floor.

Though almost breathless with terror, I contrived to stagger away from that hateful house, the very stones of which seemed to be contagious, and reach the bench of which I have spoken, at the top of the steps, and there I sat down to think the matter out. The atmosphere was as heavy as wool, and dry as Gideon's fleece. How the morrow's sun would scorch up that narrow street, and fructify the seeds of disease and death! The least itching in my limbs or features seemed to be the precursor of small-pox, and every flush the herald of scarlet fever! I saw Lucy's frightened looks when the news should first be told her of the enemy that had made its appearance amongst us, and her hopeless face as she bent over her dying boy. Of

course it was wrong and wicked in me, and showed a great want of faith; but, at all events, my fears were not for myself. I thought of the delicate mother and her frail child, and of dear handsome Frank smitten down in his youth and happiness.

Of course we could not leave the village that night, but I resolved to hasten our departure for the projected picnic as much as possible, and that, once away, we should never return to Clovelly. I would tell Frank what had happened at the place where it had been agreed on we should dine, and then he would break the news to his wife, and we would take up our quarters elsewhere—in some town that had a resident doctor, and await our fate. If the disease was in the air, as the papers said, we should probably carry it with us, but, at all events, we should be in a better position to combat it than where we were at present. To be in Clovelly, as it seemed to me, was to lie down in our coffins at once; and, indeed, there was not much more room to turn round in it. My morbid fancy pictured a sad procession winding up that very street, carrying on their shoulders a dreadful something with a white pall upon it, and which contained our little Baba.

When I reached the inn, I found, to my great relief, that all our party had retired to rest, for, indeed, to have to converse cheerily with any of my dear ones with such a burden on my mind would have been a terrible ordeal; but the good landlady was up, and about, and as brisk as usual.

"I am afraid, ma'am, you won't get your clothes from the laundress quite so soon as I had expected," were her first words; "for her sister, who helps her with the washing, has fallen ill. All the small things shall, however, be sent without fail, she says."

My heart seemed to stop beating, yet I somehow contrived to say that there was no hurry about the things. If so much as a collar or a pair of cuffs had come, I would have burnt them with my own hands. I occupied myself at once with packing up not only my own clothes, but all of Lucy's that I could lay hands on, in order that they might be ready to send after us; and then retired to bed—not to rest, but to think and fear.

In the morning, Frank got up betimes, as was his custom, to go down to bathe. As he ran whistling down the stairs, I thought with a shudder how he would have to pass the infected house, and perhaps bring back with him the very peril from which I would have preserved him; still, I dared not speak. I knew his nervous organization, and that he would not be able to keep the dreadful secret from Lucy for a single hour. At breakfast, all save myself were in the highest spirits, looking forward to their day of pleasure, and even planning others to be enjoyed "while this beautiful warm weather lasted." It seemed to me as though the poor deluded creatures were dancing upon the brink of their own graves.

At last I got them off; and we walked together to

the top of the hill, which was the nearest spot to which a carriage could be brought, and began our journey. Every mile which we put between ourselves and the village took a load from my heart, and yet they rallied me upon my silence. I did my best to seem like myself, but the effort was beyond my power. Every ring of Baba's laughter went through me like a knell, and I feared to speak, lest I should utterly break down and burst into tears.

At our first halting-place, however, the long-looked for opportunity offered itself of conferring with Frank alone; and I told him all the wretched story.

To my intense horror, when I had quite done, his only reply was a roar of laughter. At first I thought his fears for Lucy and the child had driven him out of his senses.

"Be a man," said I, "and help me to do the best we can."

"But, my dear Aunt Sue, it's all a mistake," cried he: "I heard all the story of Polly's death this morning, and what she died of. *Polly's a cow;* and the foolish woman it belonged to thought it had died of the *cattle plague.* Her husband was too drunk last night to find that this was not the case; but this morning he has been making merry with his wife's mistake."

"But, Frank, she said it was their bread-winner!"

"So it was, in a sense, because they supply the milk to our inn; and if the creature had really had the disease, of course all their other cows would have had

to be destroyed. As to the sick washerwoman, who does not happen to live in the village at all, I was told, at the little post-office this morning, among other local intelligence, that she has got hay-fever. That's not a fever to be afraid of."

I burst into tears, threw myself into Frank's arms, and fainted away.

When I came to myself, Lucy was wetting my forehead with eau-de-Cologne, and Baba fanning me assiduously with the "Guide-Book to North Devon," while my nephew was regarding their united efforts with a face in which concern struggled with a very strong sense of the ridiculous.

"Frank," whispered I imploringly, "don't tell them that I packed up our things, or anything about it."

And he never did.

It was the heat that had overcome me, he said; only half a dozen times during the day the rogue would inquire: "How's Polly?—I mean, Aunt Sue."

Except for that, I never enjoyed a picnic more.

MR. BLODGERS' APOLOGY.

My Aunt Adela, in addition (I am happy to say) to much other and more valuable property, possesses a little dog called Carlo. It is not true, as some assert, that to admire this animal is a passport to her favour —although to show any dislike to him would undoubtedly be to lose it. "Love me, love my dog" is her motto; but you may love him, or (to put my own case) you may not dislike him so much as you dislike Aunt Adela, and yet not be (like my cousin Agesilaus) her pet nephew. Some people seem to have affections only to bestow them in the wrong quarters; they have pets, but not the right pets. However, to my tale, or rather to Carlo's tail, which is quite straight. It used to be curly until a certain catastrophe happened to it last November: it was run over by an enormous dray, and, so to speak, ironed out. Thank Heaven, I had nothing to do with *that!* Elizabeth, my aunt's maid, an old-fashioned person, who, having been "in the family" for a quarter of a century, was thought worthy of the sacred trust, was taking him out for a ramble. Newly washed and woolly white, he was attached to her (it was supposed firmly)

by a silken string, and she had a hook to her umbrella to restrain him in extreme cases, which caused her to resemble a shepherdess with her lamb; but all these precautions proved useless. He escaped from her custody, with the terrible result I have described.

Elizabeth protested that she "scarcely took her eyes off the sweet dog" (he is a nice dog enough, but his mistress will give him meat meals, and therefore he is not sweet), "and only turned her head to read a tract in a shop window;" but I know better. Three troops of dragoons went by, and *that*—as might have happened to a much older and uglier woman—turned her head.

To conceal from her mistress the fact of Carlo's tail having become straight was, of course, impossible; you might as well have tried to deceive a vigilant auditor of accounts by showing him a one for an eight; and my aunt's distress of mind was indescribable. The winter, she said, had indeed set in with severity for her; and Christmas would not be the Christmas of old time. As that was the only occasion on which she was wont to open her purse-strings to her younger relatives, I sincerely trusted that this statement might be a poetical one, or that, at all events, there would be no change in that particular custom. "Never again," she averred, "should that little angel go out of her sight into the wicked, cruel world;" and henceforth, forbidden the back garden, Carlo passed his outdoor time on the drawing-room balcony.

From there, at first, "his sober wishes never learnt to stray;" his thoughts were entirely occupied upon his tail, which, though lost to sight (for it was too stiff and painful to be wagged into view), was never absent from his memory. He knew it was there, and the problem that occupied his mind was, why had it become invisible? Presently, as it recovered tone, though never shape—it always stuck out like a lion's tail over a public-house—he caught sight of it, and then its marvellous metamorphosis puzzled him even more than its disappearance had done. He remembered the operation, no doubt, but probably ascribed it to some phenomenal intervention of Nature—the fall of a mountain, or even of a comet. At times, however, I used to think some rudimentary idea of the Darwinian theory would cross his mind; for, after long fits of abstraction, he would shake his head, and begin to trot about quite cheerfully, as if content to obey the Universal Law.

After awhile, when it ceased to remind him of its existence, he forgot all about his tail, and concentrated his intelligence upon schemes of escape from his balcony. Although not so intelligent as Baron Trenck, he was quite as persevering; the earth was frost-bound, and even if it had been fit for engineering operations he couldn't have got at it. For weeks he watched at the little gate that opened upon the steps which led into the garden; and after about five thousand observations —about the number of times it was shut in his face— came to the conclusion that it was not intended for

canine egress. He then turned his attention to the front railing, and, squeezing with great difficulty through its bars, would stand for hours with his head out (for it was a very tight fit, and not, therefore, worth his while to withdraw it in a hurry) and contemplate the drop of eighteen feet or so. Aunt Adela would have it that it was the beauties of nature that attracted him; the icicles on the trees, the snow-wreaths on the evergreens, etc.; but Carlo was not such a fool as *that:* I repeat, and, indeed, the event proved it, he was calculating the drop. Failing to make this less by looking at it, the astute animal tried the left-hand railing which separated my aunt's balcony from that of her neighbour, and emancipated himself at the first trial. The drawing-room door was open, and in two minutes Carlo had scuttled through the house and into the street. The exact date of his emancipation, if, like the Baron, he had kept a diary, would have been entered as December 17, 1884.

It is amazing, considering all the talk about the sagacity of our "four-footed friends," how eagerly they seize upon the first opportunity to leave the lap of luxury for a life of exigency and want. They never seem to know when they are well off, and in this respect have no counterparts for folly among human kind except in boys who run away to sea, and in a few well-to-do and worthy men who aspire to be members of Parliament. My pity for Carlo was sincere, for though folk without home and friends in a great city are said to be treated "worse than dogs," even for dogs it is not

pleasant in winter-time; but I confess it was mitigated by the reflection that such a consummate little idiot hardly deserved to be comfortable.

Aunt Adela, however, was in despair. She always used to express a withering scorn for advertisements, and wonder how "anyone in their sober senses" could think of being influenced by them; "for her part, she bought things when she wanted them, and not because people she knew nothing about tried to persuade her to buy them;" but now she became what the Salvation Army term a "prisoner to the faith" in them. She seemed to think of nothing else; "Advertise, advertise, advertise," was her one cry. I ventured to remark that that business was, with a few exceptions, conducted on the ready-money system; upon which, exclaiming that my cousin Agesilaus (the pet) would never have mocked a sacred sorrow with any such sordid observation, she flung me her purse and burst into tears.

There was only three-and-sixpence in it, which does not go far in the way of world-wide circulation, but I invested it judiciously in a most respectable print, and within four-and-twenty hours it produced a dog-stealer.

Never had Acacia Villa, the haunt—indeed, the home—of peripatetic preachers and missionary matrons, opened its doors, especially at Christmas-time, to such a visitor. One cannot say his dress was unseasonable, but it was certainly peculiar. He wore a fluffy over-coat with pockets large and numerous enough to hold

a whole pack of Carlos, velveteen dittos, an immense red woollen scarf, aad a sealskin cap. A short pipe was in his mouth. The nails in his boots not only left such impressions upon the snow on our gravel walk as it seemed no thaw could ever erase, but upon the tiles in the hall, and he called Elizabeth, who opened the door to him, "my dear."

Nevertheless, his card, with "Mr. William Blodgers, dog fancier, Whitechapel," upon it, procured him an interview with Aunt Adela at once. The herald that brought tidings of her lost darling was welcome in any shape.

I had the honour to be present at the interview.

Aunt Adela wept tears which might have been pearls so far as cost was concerned, for I am convinced that Mr. Blodgers increased his price for every one of them.

"Had *he* the little dawg? Gracious goodness!" (he was much more emphatic in his ejaculations than *that*) "what could have put that into the good lady's head? He had only a fancy for little dawgs, and having chanced to see this un in the neighbourhood, had looked in to say so." Notwithstanding, he didn't doubt that, in case parties acted honourable and in a liberal spirit—*i.e.*, if no questions were asked and a ten-pound note were to be paid—Carlo would be forth-coming.

"But if I were to give you a ten-pound note," ob-

jected Aunt Adela, "which is a great deal of money—how do I know that I should ever get my dog?"

Mr. Blodgers drew himself up with dignity, and smote his mole-skinned breast.

"My word, mum," he replied, "is as good as my bond."

Aunt Adela rubbed her mittened hands gently together and looked exceedingly embarrassed; it was necessary for her to repress the reply that rose naturally to her lips, in connection with the value likely to be attached by any responsible body (such as the Committee of the Stock Exchange or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners) even to Mr. Blodgers' bond.

"Moreover," continued that gentleman, "unless I have the money, you may take your davey that you will never see that there dawg again."

This last sentence had all the force of a postcript to a lady's letter. It contained the gist of the whole matter. I could read in the workings of Aunt Adela's face that she was picturing to herself unspeakable alternatives: *imprimis* her Carlo put to death in default of ransom, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, as among Italian brigands, and his skin sent to her by the parcel post.

"What do you think, John?" she murmured to me beseechingly.

I had heard her so many times dilate upon the miserable evils produced by human weakness, and on the duty incumbent on us to resist to the uttermost

all temptation to palter with eternal principles, that I was not at all surprised that she thus shifted to my shoulders the responsibility of compounding a felony. She believed, as I well understood, that a young man of my easy-going disposition would have no more scruples on this matter than on any other, but would advise her as she secretly wished to be advised.

Nor was her confidence misplaced.

"It appears to me, my dear aunt," returned I, "that you have no choice but to trust to Mr. Blodgers' word."

From a secret depository in her desk (which I have never seen opened on *my* account) she produced what her spiritual adviser, the Rev. Habakkuk Hornblower, would undoubtedly have stigmatized the "wages of sin," a beautiful crisp ten-pound note, and handed it over with a sigh to Mr. Blodgers. That gentleman examined it critically, holding it up to the light—not, as he explained, that he had any doubts about the water-mark, but because he objected to any marks whatever that tended to identification—and thrust it into his pocket.

"And when shall I have Carlo back again?" pleaded Aunt Adela. "To-night? Oh, I do hope to-night!"

"Well, mum, I will not deceive you. I have, you see, not myself got the dear little dawg. I only knows the party as has got him. But to-night, or to-morrow night at furthest, I hope to return him to your loving arms."

Mr. Blodgers' words were poetic, but he had not

what is called among the clergy "a good delivery." His voice was hoarse to gruffness, and he had a habit, which would have been fatal to pulpit eloquence, of wiping his mouth at uncertain intervals with the back of his hand.

"I should like," he concluded, with a certain hesitation, which, however, had nothing of the character of bashfulness in it, "before leaving this here house, to drink that dear little dawg's health."

My aunt pointed to the cellaret, and I poured him out a glass of marsala. It is a liquor which she often gives to me; and I thought it would certainly be good enough for Mr. Blodgers. He tossed it off without reflection, but seemed immediately to repent of his precipitancy.

"I am sorry to be so troublesome, young gentleman," he said, "but after *that* I must ask for a glass of gin."

The gesture that accompanied the request made it evident that it would not be merely drinking for drinking sake, but that he stood in need of a stomachic.

When he had gone, I expected Aunt Adela to "break out," for she was a woman not only endowed with considerable self-respect, but who practised the strictest economy. As the worst part of love, like that of a wig, is said to be "the parting," so it was with her as regarded money: she never could bear to decrease her store, far less her balance at her bankers'. And here was a ten-pound note gone, or as good as

gone, in five minutes, and her marsala (to say the least of it) depreciated.

Yet, strange to say, whether struck by the independence of character he had displayed, or by his manners (which were certainly original), or, as is more likely, moved with regret for her lost dog, and by the consciousness that in Mr. Blodgers lay the only hope of its recovery, she had not a word to say against that gentleman after his departure. On the contrary, she expressed a favourable opinion of him.

"I think, John, we can trust that man: he seems to me to have a certain honesty in his way; while the fact of his proposing my sweet Carlo's health, to my mind, was a very tender touch."

It was not my business to remind her that mere brutal bluntness was not necessarily honesty, or to point out that it is the habit of the lower classes to propose toasts, not from any sentimental motives, but merely as an excuse for a glass, or, as they more commonly term it, "a drain." I contented myself with maintaining what I considered a judicious silence concerning Mr. Blodgers.

There are some people, however, no matter what prudence they display, who are always getting into hot water; and this has been my lot through life as regards Aunt Adela. My cousin Agesilaus, with not one-half of my intelligence, has a certain blundering natural way with him that succeeds with her in the most inexplicable manner. Upon a question of fact, he will often con-

tradict her point-blank, whereas I, with all the will in the world, have not what he calls the moral courage, but what *I* call "the cheek," to venture even to remark that she may be mistaken.

For the next twenty-four hours after Mr. Blodgers' visit all went well; but when a couple of days had elapsed without any sign of his return, my aunt turned on me as though she was half a hoop and I had trodden on her. Why had I persuaded her, she would inquire, contrary to her own convictions and her sense of right, to have any dealings with such a man as Mr. Blodgers? If it had been *my* ten-pound note, she had the cruelty to remark (for no form of sarcasm is so bitter as that which is founded on fact), I should have hesitated long enough before entrusting it to any-one without some material guarantee. And then she would wind up with some remarks upon selfishness and self-seeking, which, considering that she did not hesitate to mention names, were little short of personal.

No one can tell, unless he is the nephew (and not the favourite nephew) of an aunt from whom he has great expectations, and who is the most self-willed and unreasonable of her sex, what I suffered for the next ten days. Martyrdom has, I am told, its attractive side for some people; but persecution, with the consciousness that there is nothing to be got from it, is a much more serious matter.

Christmas, as she predicted, was certainly not the Christmas of old times at Acacia Villa; it was very

much worse. Even the ministrations of Mr. Hornblower, though he well understood how to smooth the cat (if I may be allowed the expression) the right way, failed to comfort his patroness; the fact is, my aunt's conscience reproached her (now that the man had deceived her) for her bribery of Mr. Blodgers, and she turned on me as though my advice had been the means of her losing not only the ten-pound note, but her chances of future happiness.

Late on Christmas Eve, however, Mr. Blodgers reappeared, with Carlo in his arms, as unexpectedly as a new constellation. One would naturally imagine that there would have been a revulsion of feeling in my favour; but this was very far from being the case. The flood-gates of my aunt's affection were opened, and they poured unrestrainedly over the hairy prodigal and his restorer; but not one drop from them came my way. She was quite angry with me when I got out the marsala, as before, for our furry friend.

"Do you not remember, John," she inquired, with irritation, "that Mr. Blodgers prefers liqueur?"

I made some allowance, however, for my aunt's feelings of gratitude. The little dog had been evidently well treated, and was in good case; he had been brought back to her after she had given up all hope of his return, and here was the man who had brought him, though not, it is true, without a consideration. Moreover, he seemed to have a private re-

gard for Carlo, to judge by the way in which he looked at him.

"Yes, mum," said Mr. Blodgers, when my aunt paid him a compliment to that effect, "one can't help taking an interest in a dawg like that. It's no wonder you loves him; but," here he uttered a deep sigh, "there's another as loves him as much as you do."

My aunt was touched.

"You are fond of Carlo yourself, then, Mr. Blodgers?"

"Me, mum? No, mum; a labouring man like me —why, how could I afford such faldiddles?"

My aunt looked puzzled, but pursued her investigations no further. For all her ridiculous leaning towards the man, I think she was rather afraid of his "saying things" that would shock her.

"There is only one thing, Mr. Blodgers, that I wished to ask you," she said, as he made his bow; "I had all along every confidence in your word, though there were some who discredited it"—here she cast an upbraiding glance in my direction. "But do tell me how it was that you kept Carlo so long?"

"Me keep him? La, bless you, not me, mum. The fact is, between ourselves, the old lady as I sold him to intermediate—on the very day you offered the reward —she grew so fond of him that *I hadn't the heart to take him away from her under the week.*"

A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

EVERYBODY who was not a child at the time remembers the failure of the Barton Bank, and many have good cause to remember it. It was by far the greatest financial catastrophe of the present century. It happened in the North, but the shock was felt in every corner of the land. What was exceptional about it was that, instead of confining itself, as most banks do when they break, to ruining the widow and the orphan, it ruined everyone who had a share in it—great and small. Its liabilities were so enormous—for the thing took place long before banks became "limited"—that none of its shareholders, however wealthy, could meet it. As "call" after "call" was made, those who possessed small or moderate means lost their all, and the burthen of debt was transferred to broader shoulders, which were, nevertheless, unable to bear it. It licked up their fortunes like a flame, and then attacked still richer men; them it devoured also, and then began to pinch the millionaires, whom, in course of time, it consumed with the rest. The last "call," unlike the last

trump, was addressed to the dead only; there were no shareholders left "alive," in the Stock Exchange sense, and everybody was ruined. If the whole story could be told by one who knew the facts, which involved the destruction of all that men hold dear in all conditions of human life, it would be the greatest and saddest romance in the world.

What was very curious, and might have been most serious, her Majesty the Queen was nearly becoming one of the sufferers. Someone having died intestate, his estate had reverted to the Crown, and a part of it consisted of shares in the Barton Bank; but fortunately it was held by her advisers to be beneath her dignity to be connected with any commercial undertaking, and the dangerous gift was declined. There was a rather audacious skit written at the time on the supposition that the money had been accepted. It described the royal dwellings on sale, and not fetching a large figure in the market. Kensington went for the price of its materials; St. James's nobody would bid for; and just as a good bargain was about to be concluded for Buckingham Palace, it was found that the title was doubtful—there was a question if it did not belong to the nation. The great struggle, however, was over Windsor Castle, where the creditors insisted on taking up their quarters, even if they could not sell it. Ikey Moses (of the firm of Moses and Ahasuerus) actually seized on the Round Tower, and resided there for weeks; he used to take pleasure in exhibiting two dozen

silk pocket-handkerchiefs which he had cut out of the Royal Standard with his own hand. Her Majesty's noble struggles to pay off her obligations had had no parallel (in the skit) since Sir Walter Scott's endeavours in the same line. She wrote five hundred autographs a day, and sold them at five shillings apiece, and afterwards, when the market became flooded with them, even cheaper; but no sacrifice could extricate her from her financial embarrassments; and in the end (if I remember rightly) the Prince of Wales (after parting with all his "orders"), with a simple expression of astonishment ("My stars and garters!"), had to cut off the entail, and the reversion of the monarchy was sold to the only man who had the ready money to buy it, who happened at that time to be Baron Grant. I mention this little *jeu d'esprit* to illustrate the tremendous effect that the failure of the Barton Bank had on minds even the most frivolous, and also because I think it deserves to be rescued from oblivion; but I certainly saw no fun in the matter at the time—the whole subject was much too awful and overwhelming.

How I, a young fellow of twenty-four, and with scarcely more than that amount of shillings for my weekly income, as clerk to an auctioneer, became connected with the gigantic crash was as follows:

Though my daily work lay at Dulborough, some miles inland, I lived with my aunt, Deborah Hunt (my father's sister), in her cottage at Mailing, a village on the east coast, and went to and from the office by the

railway. She had adopted me from early childhood, when I lost my parents, and behaved to me, so far as her slender means would permit, with the utmost generosity and kindness. If anyone could supply the place of a mother, she indeed had done so, and—for a boy—I don't think I was ungrateful. Still, as I grew up to man's estate, though I had none of any other kind at all, I might perhaps have found Mailing a little tedious, even with that daily change to Dulborough, but for the presence of Madge Richardson, a girl of about the same age as myself, and whom I loved even better, I fear, than dear Aunt Deborah. It is sad how lightly the self-sacrifice of years and tie of blood will sometimes weigh in the scale against a supple form and a pretty face; but to do Madge (and myself) justice, she had far stronger claims on my affection than these, nor was she a new-comer in my heart, such as with a smile, or a tear, or, alas! even a wink, will often oust an old one, who little deserves such treatment. I had known Madge all my life, and every year, especially the last seven or eight, had made her dearer to me. Aunt Deborah (unselfish soul!) thought it the most natural thing in the world that I should prefer an evening walk along the cliffs with Madge in the summer time, or an hour's chat by Widow Richardson's ingle, to her own homely company.

"It is not quite true," she would say, with her kind smile, "that crabbed age and youth cannot live together, is it, Jack? because we have done it these many years,

But it is only reasonable that like should seek like. I am not jealous of Madge, my dear, and only love her less than yourself."

We were very grateful to her—both of us; but I am afraid I took every advantage of this generous permission.

"Many a morning by the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper filled my pulses with the fulness of the spring;
Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips."

Only Madge was never false to me, as the heroine of that immortal poem was to *her* "young man."

So kind and thoughtful was my good aunt, that she did not insist, as one's ancient relatives generally do, upon our delaying our marriage till I should have made a fortune to support a wife, which I might have done, perhaps, at fifty or fifty-five.

"I have just four thousand pounds, my dear, of my own," she said, "which will all be yours when I go home." (She always spoke of heaven as home, and if any woman had a right to call it so, it was Aunt Deborah.) "Now, what I propose is, that I should sell out half of it, and buy you a partnership with your present employer. Then, according to his account of matters, you will have an income sufficient to marry upon."

It was indeed a generous proposal, and one that made my mouth water; but I had the grace to say, "And how will you contrive to live on the interest of

two thousand pounds? No, my dear aunt, I cannot allow you to make such a sacrifice."

She took no notice of the latter part of my reply, for she knew me better than I knew myself, and that I had not the courage to resist such a temptation.

"Well, we must live together, my dear, for the present, as we do now, for this house is larger than Mrs. Richardson's, you know, and I don't think Madge will object to my company; and I must try and get a little better interest for my remaining money than I do at present."

If I had not been overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, perhaps I should have told her that large interest meant bad security, as a magnificent climate always means mosquitoes; but I was in the seventh heaven, and had lost sight of all earthly dross such as business matters.

Small as was our village, a lawyer managed to get a living out of it and the parts adjacent. Mr. Morbit was his name, and a highly respected one it was, for it was supposed he had made a good bit of money. He, of course, had the best house in the place, and the only one which was never let in the season to visitors. He did business for the county gentry, but was not too proud (if they had any substance) to give his legal assistance to the humblest. It was even reported that (if they had any good security to offer) he would lend them money. He helped the fishermen in this way, when the harvest of the sea was unproductive, and

thereby came to hold shares in their little fleet. To look at him was to receive an impression of financial stability. He was a portly man, with features as well lined as a ledger, and a soft, confident voice which made all obstacles to his arguments seem smooth. The only thing that seemed false about him was his Welsh wig.

My partner that was to be—I mean the auctioneer, of course, not Madge—had the same high opinion of him that everybody else had, and recommended Aunt Deborah to apply to him with regard to the settlement of her affairs, which, indeed, she would have done in any case. As soon as he understood the nature and extent of them he would not hear of her troubling herself to visit his office, the weather at the time being exceedingly inclement, but came in person to the cottage to talk the matter over. He sold out the stock for her from the Three per Cents, in which it stood, and purchased the share in my employer's business for me, and then had a long talk with her in my presence as to the investment that should be sought for her other two thousand pounds. He proposed various securities, but on the whole was in favour of purchasing shares in the Barton Bank. The liability, I ventured to observe, was unlimited.

"The liability, as our young friend remarks," he answered with a gentle smile, "is unlimited, and a bank is liable to break, which may also be said of the Bank of England; that catastrophe is as likely to happen to

the one as to the other. If it was not unlimited the shares would be unattainable, whereas, at present prices, they pay interest at eight per cent. You will, in fact, my dear madam, get a larger income from your two thousand pounds thus invested than from your four thousand pounds as it was placed before. I have shares in the bank myself, and I am rather a cautious person; on the other hand, the Barton Bank is not in need of your money any more than I am, and you can put it where you like."

Aunt Deborah had no liking in that way, having about as clear notions of investments generally as she had of the Chaldee tongue, and was very willing to fall in with the lawyer's view; but I thought it looked well and business-like to raise another objection or two, among them the obvious fact that the Barton Bank might not always pay so much as eight per cent.

Again Mr. Morbit patronized me in the same overwhelming manner.

"Your nephew, madam, remarks with great sagacity that we can't always rely on eight per cent.; but it is my conviction that the interest will rise rather than fall, and, indeed—if it were not unprofessional—I would myself guarantee you that it would never sink below seven per cent."

After an undertaking of that sort—though, to be sure, not actually entered into—by a man like Mr. Morbit, there was nothing more of course to be said, so matters were arranged as he proposed, and, to save

my aunt all bother and trouble, it was settled that he himself should forward the interest to her half-yearly, when the dividends were declared. And so, in fact, he did.

I did not attend to the business perhaps so diligently as I should have done (though, indeed, I don't see how I could have helped or hindered it), for I was too full of delight and happiness. To become a partner, at my age, in a house (though it was but a small one) where one had been a clerk, was enough to turn any young fellow's head; but besides that, to be thereby enabled to marry the girl of my heart, was a reflection that was rapture indeed.

If I were to begin to speak of that subject I should never have done, but it is possible that those who do not know Madge might find it a little tedious, so I confine myself to Aunt Deborah and her investment. We lived under the same roof with her, as she had proposed, and very comfortably. My own contribution to the housekeeping was now a substantial help, and the proceeds of her shares were paid by Mr. Morbit with admirable punctuality, and, as he had predicted, so far from diminishing, they once reached over ten per cent.

It was exactly twelve months after my marriage with Madge that that excellent dividend had been declared, a circumstance which, as Aunt Deborah declared (as if the money had been ours), should

diminish any anxiety we might feel about making provision for a certain little stranger who had just arrived at the cottage, though not unexpectedly. For folks in our humble way we had indeed quite a respectable income, when suddenly, like "a bolt out of the blue," came the dreadful news that the Barton Bank had stopped payment. As Mr. Morbit had said, there had seemed to the world at large as much likelihood of it as of the breaking of the Bank of England, though, of course, its rotten state must have been known to some persons for years before—a ghastly secret, indeed, for them to carry about with them. How often could they have destroyed the happiness of a home with a whisper, or, on the other hand, perhaps, saved it from ruin, had they dared to speak!

The news came to our office at Dulborough early one afternoon in spring, and, though it drove me almost out of my mind with the horror of it, I had the sense to take the next train home at once to prevent the tidings reaching my dear ones through other lips than mine. I did not do so, however, before I had been to the local bank, where we kept our modest account, and had the matter fully corroborated; the banker, who had not suffered himself, but who knew my position, and I believe honestly pitied me, gave me the characteristic piece of comfort:

"Things might have been worse, my poor fellow—the two thousand pounds your aunt advanced to you might all have gone with the rest."

"But there will surely be something paid in the pound?" I murmured.

"As I am advised," he said gravely, "there will not be one farthing. Except as a matter of time, it will signify nothing whether a shareholder held ten shares in the Barton Bank or ten thousand. He will equally be stripped to his last shilling."

At the time I could hardly believe such a terrible story; but it was true, every word of it.

On reaching Mailing, and before going to the cottage, I called at Mr. Morbit's—the benefit of his advice even in that hour of wretchedness seemed to be worth having—and I had forgotten for the moment—for misery makes us very selfish—that he himself had shares in the bank. The lawyer was not in, but his clerk, whom I knew well, beckoned me into a private room.

"You are come about that Barton business, I suppose?" he said. "Well, it is worse than anything you can have heard of it." Then in a whisper, "Between ourselves, my man is off."

By his "man" he meant his master.

"Do you mean to say that Mr. Morbit has——"

I could not finish the sentence, so intense were my emotions, for what the clerk hinted at was indeed of terrible augury to ourselves.

"Hooked it," he said, "that's the simple fact. He talked about urgent business, but I know what that meant. We shall never see his Welsh wig and his

Roman nose again. He ain't going to wait here to be sold up, bless yer."

"Do you mean that his house will have to be sold?"

"Of course it will; that is, it would be if it was not mortgaged down to the cellar step already. Every stick that every shareholder in the Barton Bank possesses will have to go."

Then I went home and told my dear ones as tenderly as I could what had happened. They could have borne it, however I had told it. What courage, what endurance, what trust in Heaven those two good women had! It made me ashamed of myself, but on the other hand I had greater cause for depression, for was it not for my sake that dear Aunt Deborah had ruined herself!

Curiously enough, she took exactly the same tone of argument as the Dulborough banker had.

"Well, my dear Jack," she said, "it might have happened, you know, that I had taken Mr. Morbit's advice, and put the whole four thousand into the bank instead of buying your partnership with the half of it. So, in point of fact, it is you who have so far preserved me."

"Aunt Deborah," exclaimed Madge, "you're an angel."

With which she burst into tears, and I am not ashamed to say I followed her example.

We had now, indeed, as we felt, and, in fact, so it turned out, nothing but auctioneering to live upon. It

was only a question of time when Aunt Deborah's bed should be sold under her, and the roof over her head.

In a few weeks the first "call" was made on the shareholders, and as far as their fortunes were concerned it was like "the first warning" that precedes human decay. Like "pallid death" itself the summoner knocked at every door, from that of the great landlord to the small shopkeeper, but, by some inexplicable chance, it did not knock at our door.

Aunt Deborah was waiting for it with her little instalment which she had scraped up, before finally disposing of her cottage, but it did not come. As she had made up her mind to the worst, it was far from a relief to her, and though I implored her not to precipitate calamity, she wrote to the liquidators of the bank to inform them that they had omitted to give her notice of the call. In a day or two she received the following reply:

"MADAM,—In reply to your favour, we have the pleasure to inform you that your name does not appear among the shareholders of the Barton Bank."

Never was curt communication so rapturously received, but it was nevertheless inexplicable. I hastened at once to Mr. Morbit's clerk, who was the only legal authority left in the place, for it was quite true that his late employer had cut and run, leaving the very worst of reputations behind him.

"What does this mean?" I inquired, putting the bank letter into his hand.

"Well, it just means that your aunt is a very lucky woman. My man has robbed everybody right and left, and her among them. Instead of putting her money into the bank, he must have kept it for his own speculations, though paying her the interest quite regularly. She has lost her two thousand pounds, but that's the worst of it."

And it *was* the worst. Her cottage, which it would have broken her heart to leave, and its pretty furniture were preserved to her. I have succeeded in life—perhaps beyond my merits, but Madge says "No"—and long since paid Aunt Deborah back her two thousand pounds; the other two thousand pounds which she most luckily invested in my partnership I can never persuade her to accept; but there it is, and more too, Heaven bless her! should she ever require it. But I can never get her to take the same view of Mr. Morbit's character that everybody else does.

"Perhaps he did not mean it, dear Jack," she says, "but he saved me from ruin. If good intentions that come to nothing are valueless, as we are always told, perhaps bad intentions that turn out well should be placed to our credit. At all events, whenever I look round my little cottage I bless Mr. Morbit. He was our Guardian Angel!"

A CHEAP TOUR.

Sir Richard Gibbs of Newton Hall was a self-made man, but well made: he was not of amateur construction. He had created a large fortune by honourable means, and had been much respected in the City. But he was not so popular in the county as he deserved to be. He was straightforward, well-meaning, and in all public matters extremely liberal; but his manners, if not absolutely rough, were unconciliatory, even dictatorial. He set no great value on money for its own sake, but highly esteemed the man who made it; and *he* had made it. He not only detested idleness, but thought every young man should work, and work hard, even if his future were assured to him.

His son Charley was not of that opinion, and his views were shared by most other young men in the neighbourhood; the sons of men of fortune, like himself. Charley was kept by his father very short in the matter of pocket-money, and had it not been for his mother, who secretly supplemented his allowance, that youth would have been debarred from joining in many amuse-

ments—even innocent amusements—of those of his class and age. This was an error on Sir Richard's part.

Mr. Beaumont of the Grange, who was his near neighbour, admired, however, his conduct in this matter, though in little else. He, too, had a son, with great expectations, and very much disinclined to economy; but what Lionel Beaumont spent was solely on himself, whereas Charley was openhanded to everybody, which makes a great difference in lavishness.

The Beaumonts were an old family, and held their heads very high—"gave themselves infernal airs" was Sir Richard's way of putting it. Though by reason of her title Lady Gibbs was taken down to dinner before Mrs. Beaumont, she would have been made to feel that she was her social inferior if she had been capable of being wounded in that way; but she was a cheery, sound-hearted woman, who on a question of precedence was once heard to remark:

"They may put me where they like, for all I care, unless it's in a draught, because that gives me the rheumatism."

Everybody who was not anybody—and they form the large majority of the human race—liked Lady Gibbs; but her husband, as has been said, was not popular.

This was hard, because he subscribed handsomely to everything—the County Hospital and the Lunatic Asylum and the local volunteers—which Mr. Beaumont

did not do; for, though quite as rich, he was close-fisted. I had opportunities, as parson of the parish, of knowing much of both families, and in spite of my ecclesiastical prejudice in favour of the old-established race, I preferred the new-comers. If there was a case of sickness among the poor, or of the loss of a bread-winner, or of a cow, I went to the Hall, and not to the Grange; and many a time, in addition to the parental donation, did Charley press his half-a-crown upon me out of a very scanty purse.

Both boys had left school, but Lionel was proceeding to the University, while Charley was to go into his father's business, in which, though he had retired from it, he had still a great deal of money. They were each about eighteen years of age, and had seen "nothing of life," as the phrase runs—as though life was something outside one, and could be viewed only at this or that place of exhibition. It can be viewed always and everywhere—though not often gratuitously.

There was some time to be passed at home before the young man "buckled to," as Sir Richard called it; and he thought Charley ought to "feel his feet" first, and that this was best to be done by going abroad entirely on his own hook for a month or so. Charley would have been perfectly willing had the terms been liberal, but this was far from being the case. When we are very poor every shilling is of consequence, and to save it is a sure and certain—though very unpleasant—method of getting rich; but when we have "made

our pile" such a course of conduct is no longer economical, but miserly.

It is, however, difficult to throw off old habits, and in matters of personal expenditure Sir Richard was as sparing as ever. In his son he saw himself when he had been a young man, and had had to earn his bread, and concluded that what had sufficed for him would suffice for Charley. He did, indeed, take into some consideration the habits his son had acquired; but the allowance he at last decided to give him—namely, ten shillings a day, travelling included—was certainly much too small.

It was true he drew up a most accurate plan of proceeding, with the rates set against the meals, and amount of mileage by third-class; so that it showed quite a handsome surplus out of the fifteen pounds when the thirty days were done; but Charley looked askance at it, and I am quite certain had not from the first the faintest intention of keeping his expenses within such narrow limits. He trusted to his mother, as usual, to see him through it; but for once he found his supplies in that direction cut off. Sir Richard had persuaded her that this was a test-case of their son's intelligence and capability of transacting affairs; and having the utmost confidence in her dear Charley's sagacity, she had promised not to thwart so hopeful a scheme. The matter was made no secret, and was much debated.

"I don't think, my dear Lady Gibbs," said Mrs.

Beaumont, not very good-naturedly, "that your Charley is quite the sort of young gentleman to practise economy."

"Well, well, we shall see," returned the other. "Of course he will have a trying time of it, but I have promised him a pound for every shilling he brings back, so as to give him every encouragement."

The intentions of his father, if he had but known them, were even more liberal. He meant to give him a very handsome present indeed if he should prove himself a chip of the old block. This of course was not so much liberality—though he was only sparing in small things—as egotism. Moreover, his neighbour had openly flouted him about the matter:

"If your boy does it, Lionel shall do it; but your boy will never do it. He doesn't know the value of money."

If Mr. Charley should come home with anything to spare, it would therefore be a great triumph for Sir Richard.

Lionel, too, had expressed his opinion that the experiment would prove a disastrous failure.

"Why, every beggar-woman Charley meets on the road," he said to me contemptuously, "will get some of that fifteen pounds; he might just as well take fifteen pence with him."

And I confess that I was of Master Lionel's opinion. What I was afraid of was that Charley would borrow money from somebody or other, and deceive his father; for I have noticed that dissimulation often comes of

keeping young people too short. But this I afterwards found he had promised not to do; and, though inclined both to recklessness and extravagance, he was a man of his word. He spoke to me quite openly upon the affair:

"As the pater and mater both wish me to try to 'live on nothing a day and find myself,' I am going to make the experiment. I shall follow the route that has been given me exactly. I think my money will last me perhaps a week, and get me as far as Basle, and there I shall live in pawn, I suppose, till I am redeemed."

"But ten shillings a day, my dear boy, is not 'nothing,' though I admit it is a short allowance; and you need not be extravagant with it. If it all goes in a week your father will be very angry."

"Well, I have some right to be angry too," he answered. "I am not going to journey like a journeyman tailor, but like an English gentleman. Lionel has done nothing but chaff me from the first moment this hateful plan was hit upon for my humiliation."

He was, indeed, one of those young gentlemen who derive considerable enjoyment from the misfortunes of their friends.

When Charley left home I certainly expected it would not be for the whole time agreed upon, and I was not without my fears that the abbreviation of his tour would be the cause of serious trouble at home. But, strange to say, the letters his mother received from him from time to time were not only contented,

but cheerful. Small as were his means of doing so, he seemed to be enjoying himself very much, and not a word was said about the shortness of his funds.

In obedience to his father's instructions, he always enclosed a list of his expenses, and they were so very like what they should have been, as calculated by Sir Richard, that they might have been copied from his very programme—which, indeed, they were. The worthy knight was charmed, and expressed his conviction that, "when put to it, Charley was as good a manager of his own affairs as need be, and knew how to cut his clothes according to his cloth as well as any man."

Mr. Beaumont's idea, on the contrary, was that the lad had applied to the Jews, which made his neighbour frantic.

"My son has promised not to borrow money of anybody," he roared, "and I can trust him."

But I confess, much as I liked the young fellow, that I began to have my doubts. I did not forget what he had told me of his own intentions in the matter, which his conduct seemed to so diametrically contradict. I could not picture him as that model of prudence and economy which he was fast becoming in his parent's eyes. However, not till the month's end did Charley return to us, and even then he had a couple of pounds left.

"Do you mean to say," cried old Mr. Beaumont,

"that they are the *bonâ-fide* remnants of your father's fifteen pounds?"

"They have never left my pocket," answered Charley.

"Well, then, you deserve"—the old squire looked for a moment as if he were going to offer his young friend some tangible proof of his admiration, but contented himself with adding—"all your father is going to give you."

Sir Richard wrote his son a cheque for £50, and his wife gave her dear economical boy forty sovereigns for his forty shillings as per agreement. The success of the expedition made quite a sensation in the county. It was canvassed far and wide, and caused many sage dissertations to be made about "What is bred in the bone," etc., and how the characteristics of a family will crop up even in members of it where you would never expect it.

But the person on whom it made the greatest impression was Mr. Beaumont. He did not believe in heredity as applied to economy, and concluded that if Charley, with his extravagant notions, could live on ten shillings a day, including his travelling expenses over half Europe, his own offspring could do the same on less. This was more or less the opinion of every father who knew Charley, and caused the allowances of such of their sons as were taking holiday abroad to be seriously curtailed; so that he was not only quoted as a model of economy, but actually made to some extent a revolution in that science. Of course this was grati-

fying to the young fellow; but what seemed to please him most was the resolution the squire arrived at of sending his own son abroad on the same terms.

Lionel came to the Hall with a long face to get "wrinkles" out of his young friend as to travel, expenditure, and the like, but Charley only referred him to his mother, who held his letters from abroad, with their accompanying "accounts," as the most precious of her possessions, and was always ready to read them to her friends. They were at once examples of filial piety, for he was a most affectionate son, and illustrations of the art of travel—cheap.

Lionel did not relish the notion of thus emulating his friend; it was like riding at an ugly place which the other fellow has already got over, somehow, and is watching your movements in perfect security, and wondering how *you* are going to do it. Still, he knew he was a better hand at economy—at least, as regarded other people, and in the matter of tips and benevolences — than Charley; and if you spend every farthing on yourself, even a small sum of money goes a good way. So he started just as the other had done, though certainly not in such high spirits—his temperament was colder, not to say morose—and *his* mother awaited news from the Continent with the same anxiety that Lady Gibbs had experienced.

On the day he departed, as it happened, some business took me to town; and Sir Richard asked me to look out for rooms for his son when he should enter

the office. They were to be handsome rooms; for the knight, now that he had found that Charley could live upon a little, was willing enough to make self-denial unnecessary to him. Indeed, it was difficult to exaggerate the benefits that foreign travel—or, rather, the way in which he had accomplished it—had conferred upon that young man.

At the club that evening I met a college friend who had just returned from abroad, and had a chat with him about old times in the smoking-room. To a parson in the country such talks are especially agreeable, for it is but seldom we have the chance of them. As he was so good as to ask about my affairs, I told him why I was in town, including that matter of the rooms for Charley Gibbs, in which I had been successful.

"Gibbs!" he said. "I wonder whether that was the young fellow I met in Paris last month."

"Well, it might have been, for he *was* in Paris."

"A handsome, bright-looking lad, with fair hair and dark eyes, full of fun, and who I took it for granted was, as you say, an only son, by the way he threw his money about with both hands."

"You have described him very accurately," I said, "except that he couldn't have thrown his money about, for he had none. His father is peculiar, and though very rich——"

"*I* know!" cried my friend, slapping his knees, and exhibiting the greatest excitement; "he only allowed him ten shillings a day, including his travelling expenses!"

The tears came into his eyes with laughing. I really thought—for he was fat—that the man would have had a fit.

"Come," I said; "do tell me. I knew there was something queer about that journey abroad."

"No, no; it's a secret between your young friend and me. I'm not one to tell tales out of school. Only just give him my kind regards when you see him, and say I shall not easily forget that good time at Meurice's. The boy amused me exceedingly."

"At Meurice's? Do you mean the hotel? Then, it couldn't have been Charley. He was staying at a sort of commercial travellers' inn in the suburbs that Sir Richard had had recommended to him."

"*Was* he? Ah, then, I must have been mistaken," answered my friend dryly. "Because the gay young fellow I mean was where I was, only he had a private sitting-room of his own, and gave deuced good dinners in it: cost two napoleons a head if they cost a shilling. He was also so good as to give me more than once a seat in his box at the opera."

I had had a very quiet dinner at the club, but just at that moment I felt as if I had been drinking a magnum of champagne—my head seemed to be turning round. The idea of that box at the opera—on ten shillings a day—was too astounding. Nevertheless, I was devoured by curiosity.

"Since you have told me so much, you must tell me more," I said. "Your behaviour reminds me of the

man who had lost his arm, and being pestered by the American citizen to say how it happened, replied, 'It was bit off.' You have but whetted expectation."

"I will only gratify it on one condition," replied my friend. "You must not repeat one word of what I am going to tell you to anybody. I will not have my young friend—and host—got into trouble from anything you may consider it to be your duty to say or do; nor must you get anyone else to do your 'duty' for you, as a parson often does."

I thought this an unpleasant observation, but I would have submitted to much worse things to learn the truth about Charley, and I gave the required promise.

"Well, this was how it happened, then. The young fellow never stinted himself for anything from the hour he first set foot on foreign soil. He took the route that had been planned out for him, but always travelled first-class, and fed on the best. Nor did he endanger his health by drinking *vin ordinaire*.

"When he had left the Rhine and reached Wiesbaden, he had just two pounds remaining of the fifteen pounds that were to last him for the month, and there were only five days of it gone. He took rooms at the best hotel, and having ordered his champagne to be put in ice, strolled down to the Kursaal. He meant to write home that afternoon to say that things had been dearer on the Continent than had been expected; but it was not a pleasant thing to do, so he put it off till

the evening. In the meantime, and since he would have to stay where he was till a remittance—with probably a very severe jobation—arrived, there was no reason why he should not enjoy himself.

"The sight of the splendid play-rooms, with the heaps of gold upon the tables and the notes in cages —like doves—delighted him. He had not the least idea how the game was played, but the idea struck him that since his two pounds—two napoleons and some silver—would be of no sort of use to him, he might just as well try and make more of them. If he lost, he could not be much worse off than before, for he must live on credit as it was, and had not even enough to get home with; and if he won—well, it would be very nice to have something to spend at Wiesbaden. The idea of winning a pile of money that would rescue him from all embarrassments, and prevent his troubling his folk at home, never entered into his mind. But the very first time he put his two napoleons upon the table the benevolent croupier pushed him over eighteen with a long rake.

"He had the good sense to put eight of them, including his own two, into his pocket, and there he resolved they should remain. If the worst came to the worst, and Sir Richard cut off his supplies, he could now get home; he had procured the means of retreat, and could tempt Fortune, as it were, on velvet with his ten napoleons. Once he lost half his available capital, but that was the lowest point he ever touched. He

never risked more than two at a time, but these he staked with 'great judiciousness,' as he called it; not that he knew in the least what he was doing, but trusted to luck, which, when it is kind, is worth all the 'martingales' in the world. Before he rose to go to his table d'hôte he had won two hundred and fifty napoleons, and had a most excellent appetite for dinner.

"Now, in all stories, you know, a fellow who wins money at the tables, whether at Wiesbaden or anywhere else, is made to lose it again, and then his own money, and then the money belonging to his employers; but our young friend had too much good sense for that. Nothing would have made him risk those two hundred and fifty napoleons. He most wisely and prudently resolved to have a great deal of pleasure out of them, and, so far as I could judge from his proceedings in Paris, he got it. What gave, no doubt, zest to it, was that he did a little work every day. He carefully collated, as it were, from his father's MSS. the lowest rates of living and travel, and sent them home with the somewhat triumphant heading, 'How to Travel on the Cheap.' I dare say his friends thought it funny, but if they had known all they would have thought it funnier. He never said, 'I only spent this and that'; and, indeed, he seemed to me a very truthful lad."

When my friend, who had not been a moralist even at the University, said this, I could not help, as a clergyman, giving a little groan of disapproval.

"It was certainly a *suppressio veri* if not a *suggestio falsi,*" I observed.

"Well, well, what can you expect of a young fellow with ten thousand a year made to travel as though he were a curate? And, then, consider how immensely he enjoyed himself! He couldn't have done that, you know, if his conscience had reproached him."

I was really not quite so sure of that. The whole narrative distressed me, though no doubt it had some elements of humour in it.

"The worst of it is," I said, "that Charley's success in the matter has caused another young fellow, quite as rich, but not nearly so nice, to be sent abroad by *his* father upon the same modest allowance."

When I made this announcement my friend was unhappily taking a brandy-and-soda, and it all "went the wrong way." I really thought he would have been suffocated. He seemed to think that poor Lionel Beaumont's struggles to keep within his very moderate means would be the best part of the whole story.

And, after all, he did not keep within them. He got farther than Wiesbaden—where, I am happy to say, he never thought of improving his pecuniary condition—but not much farther, and then had to write home for funds. It was a great triumph for Charley. Sir Richard was very proud and pleased, and increased the very handsome allowance he had promised to make him in town. Of course I kept my word and held my

tongue; but it is many years since then, and the good knight has long departed from us, so that I can do no harm to Charley in recording the secret of his "Cheap Tour."

UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.

It has been described to us by a master-hand how a man looks at life during the scant remains of it when sentence of death has been passed by the judge from the bench, in accordance with a law from which there is no appeal. Henceforward he is not as other men, but dwells in a world of his own, which seems to grow smaller and smaller daily, like that iron chamber in which the prisoner of the Inquisition was immured, which day by day lost one of its walls and one of its windows, and closed around him like a living tomb.

One very dear to me once received a similar sentence from the lips of a judge ("unhappily," as my friend was wont to say, with a quiet smile, "a good judge")—though not, indeed, a criminal one—and it was his humour, as I walked by his wheeled chair, to compare his own experience with that of the condemned wretch, with whose fictitious terrors all readers are familiar. Just at the very first they had some feelings in common, different as the cases were in their nature. The immediate effect of the passing of each sentence

was the same, just as when a man is run over in the street, or falls into the fire and presently succumbs, he is equally said to die of "shock."

The shock—setting aside the paraphernalia of judge and jury, and perhaps the publicity of the place in which the thing was done—was indeed greater in my friend's case than in that of the convict, from its unexpectedness; for the latter, before it happened, was only too apprehensive of its taking place, while the former had not the least suspicion of it. He felt a certain pain in a certain place as he was taking his daily walk one morning, and looked in upon his doctor for a prescription for it, just as though, if he had felt a trifle low, he might have asked him for a tonic; but when half an hour afterwards he came out of that house it was as another man. He had entered it with a light heart (he used afterward humorously to speculate as to whether the lightness of his heart, which was excessive, might not have been the cause of his calamitous condition), a man with twenty years of life before him, full of congenial work; he left it with the conviction that the years which he had calculated upon must, at the best, be represented by weeks; the road on which he had been so smoothly travelling, and must continue to travel, led, it seemed, a little way further on to a broken bridge over a dark river, the further bank of which was hid in mist.

He had, in short, been Sentenced to Death, and though with some hope of respite, with none of pardon.

He had indeed the right of appeal, of which he was advised to take advantage; but, as has been said, he knew his judge to be a good one, whose decision was unlikely to be reversed by any other. What a man's own doctor, whom he has known for years, tells him about himself, is indeed generally more trustworthy than even a "first opinion," "so called, I am sometimes tempted to believe," my poor friend used to say, "because the learned expert sees you for the first time."

At all events, in his case the higher court confirmed the judgment of the lower.

"Yours is a serious case, sir," said the great physician, after due examination and inquiry.

"You mean an incurable one?"

"We doctors do not like to use that word, but as you put the question to me so decisively, I am afraid I must answer 'Yes,' sir. You will suffer discomfort, but very little pain. Our friend here"—indicating the other doctor, for there had been a consultation, of course—"will advise you as to the regimen. Thanks. Good-morning, sir."

He might more reasonably have said "good-bye," but he had, as it were, taken his black cap off in readiness for the next patient, for whom he had already touched his silver bell.

"I knew it would be so," said my friend, in describing the affair, "and his decision gave me no shock, as on the former occasion; yet it moved me enough to show that I had not been so philosophic about the

matter as I had flattered myself. My doctor, too, looked downcast; he must have been surer than I of the result of the consultation, and yet it had apparently dashed some hope. We were old acquaintances, and respected one another, but if it had been otherwise he would have been pained. Quite apart from all sordid considerations, a good doctor is always loth to lose a patient; he has been put in charge of him, as it seems, and feels somehow answerable for his existence.

"'I suppose you have known of this long ago?' I said.

"'I have suspected it,' he replied quietly, and it struck me for the first time, how often it must happen that men who have no suspicion of the Shadow which is dogging them, are in their doctor's eyes perhaps even for years doomed men.

"As we were driving home in his carriage together, I observed: 'From what Sir Francis said, I conclude there is no immediate danger.'

"'No, yet—if you have anything to arrange for—you are a bachelor, I know; but——'

"I thanked him, and replied that my affairs were settled. Presently, 'Where would you recommend me to go,' I inquired, 'for the spring' (it was then April), 'or, perhaps, I ought rather to say, for the early part of the spring?' He took no notice of the latter part of this observation, which, perhaps, had a touch of bitterness in it, though I hope not.

"'I should advise the south coast,' he said. 'Get as

much fresh air as possible.' There was not a word about diet; the allusion Sir Francis had made to it had been only a delicate professional touch; I was in that condition that the same undesirable license as to food was given me, as is accorded to the convict that is to be hanged on the morrow."

For a day or two my friend's sensations (considering the blameless man he was) were strangely in accordance with those of the condemned criminal whose

> "Thought no more can wander free,
> But with drop, and rope, and beam,
> If he wake or if he dream,
> Must keep unbidden company."

His mind for that brief space dwelt (as he termed it) on the charnel. He even paid a visit to the spot where, in accordance with his own written instructions, he was to be laid with his forefathers, and he perused, as he had often done before, but with very different feelings, the records of that great company of the dead for whom he was so soon to exchange his present acquaintances.

"To judge by what is said of them," he afterwards said, "by those who should have known them best, they will be a very superior society."

My friend was a man without kith or kin, who lived alone, so there was unhappily no one to distract him from such imaginings, which, however, his own natural good sense soon overcame.

When he came down to Silverton-on-Sea, where I resided (a circumstance which I am glad to think decided him to select that spot wherein to pass his few remaining days), he had got over these material and morbid thoughts, and had little indeed in common with that imaginary evil-doer, whose life was about to be cut short, not more surely, if more swiftly, by the knife of the guillotine than his own by the shears of Fate. One feeling, however, he was long in getting rid of—namely, the painful sense that he was necessarily looking on this and that aspect of Nature for the last time. He did not

"Shriek to hear the hours
Pass from out the dark gaol towers;"

but as the April days passed by he confessed to a frequent feeling of regret that he should never see another springtime. It gave him, I fancied, some distress when I inadvertently referred to anything that would happen in the near future, but of which he personally would not be a witness. Once, for example, when I mentioned that Silverton would present a different appearance in the late autumn, which was our "season," he answered with a little sigh: "But not to *me*."

This "sick man's egotism," however, as he called it, he also presently got over. He had never been much of a politician, but the news of the day, though party feeling chanced just then to be running very high, and there was great excitement throughout the country, had

now absolutely no interest for him; on the other hand, he spoke with unwonted animation and great hopefulness of the progress of certain principles which he had always had at heart.

"I seem to myself," he said, "like one who has reached the summit of some over-hanging hill, from which all that lies immediately beneath it is hidden, but whence a glorious view is obtained of the far distance."

What did come immediately under his eye, however —the boatmen, the children playing on the shore, and even the few visitors that were staying in the place—attracted it; he evinced great sympathy for his fellow-invalids, and would speculate with much interest upon their chances of recovery, and (strangely enough it seemed to me) upon whether it would be to their advantage to do so. He compared them, it seemed, to wounded soldiers lying on the battle-field, in doubt whether they would be rescued or not, for I heard him murmur to himself some lines from a poem that had been a favourite one with both of us:

> "And some will awake in home mornings, and some,
> Dull slaves of the war, will still follow the drum."

When an old man met us leaning on his grandson's arm, but apparently in good health, he said: "I do not envy him; I would rather leave before my part is played out, than lag superfluous on the stage."

"That spoils the play for others, though," I ventured gently to observe.

"You mean for the friends one leaves behind?" he answered. "It is kind of you to say so; but I must confess to you that does not trouble me much. If I were leaving wife or child, or anyone who, as the phrase goes, could not 'get on without me,' it would doubtless be different. As it is, I am not so egotistic as to imagine my loss will be a void. My sole regret —to be called so—is that I have not been a better man."

"And yet I should think that you had much less than most men to reproach yourself with."

"I don't know as to that; it is so difficult for man to weigh himself against his brother man; God alone can hold the balance. We never can make allowances for this and that; we only know that

> "'The slave and the tyrant alike account must render,
> The one of his sceptre, the other of his chain.'

But if you are pleased to consider me, upon the whole, above the average, I agree with you."

My friend was, in fact, one of the kindest and gentlest of men; I could not conceive of him as capable of a harshness; and as I knew from many sources, he was leaving this world happier, if not better, than he had found it. Still, I thought it strange that he should hold this conviction of his own comparative merits.

"I see," he said, smiling, "you are astonished at my having, in my perilous state, so good an opinion of myself. You mistake me a little there, however.

Heaven forbid that I should be judged upon my merits. I know it is expected of a dying saint to proclaim himself the worst of sinners: a deplorable custom, to my mind, since so many who are probably only average mortals are thereby disheartened in their own modest little strivings after virtue; but as I am, unhappily, no saint, I find no comfort in this self-depreciation.

> "'He didn't do much harm, nor yet much good,
> And might have been much better if he would,'

is an epitaph that would probably fit most of us. We are all sinners, of course; but we do not all (as some divines would seem to affirm) make sinning our profession, and only occasionally deviate into well-doing! there are not more absolute villains, perhaps, in the world, than there are saints. Why, then, should I miscall myself a villain?"

These observations were interesting to me, not only of themselves, and from the circumstances under which they were uttered, but because my friend had always seemed to me the representative of a large and growing, though little understood, class. It is not unjust, I suppose, to say that eighty out of every hundred of us, as regards matters of "fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute," never think at all. They have no time, they say, by which they mean no turn, for such things, and their thinking is done for them. The other twenty per cent. consist of their teachers, and of more or less independent thinkers, of which, however, the majority do not profess

to be so, but to all outward seeming accept opinion as they find it. They go to church or chapel with their belongings, and when theological disputes arise among them, maintain a modest silence, as though vestments and wax candles on the one hand, or partial immersion on the other, were matters too high for them. To this diffident class my friend belonged. He thought, with the poet, that "faith and prayers" were "among the privatest of men's affairs," and rarely discussed them even with his intimates.

"I say again," he continued gravely, "Heaven forbid that I should be judged upon my merits. Though my nature is neither criminal nor vicious, thoughts sometimes have come to me which have made me loathsome to myself, and which, if uttered in public, would have prevented any respectable person—yourself, for instance—ever speaking to me again. But I cannot suppose that I am alone in this. The mind of man, even of the best of men, is like a church, dedicated to holy uses, but with vaults beneath it, full of all uncleanness. If I am 'past praying for,' as the phrase goes, there must be millions in a worse plight; and in spite of the complacency with which certain self-righteous sects affirm the contrary, I cannot believe in the wholesale condemnation of the human race."

"They would say," I put in, "that that was because you have not Faith."

"No doubt; but they would be mistaken. I have, indeed, no faith in their particular dogmas, to believe

which is no such very difficult task, by-the-by, if one has the proper foundation—a hard heart and a sycophantic tongue—to build upon; but I have faith where they have none—since they impute to Him cruelty and injustice—in the goodness of God."

"That is certainly not a complex creed," I remarked, "and most people, I should have supposed, subscribe to it."

"Simple as it is," he rejoined, "it includes everything; and as to subscribing to it, I need not remind you, who took your degree at the university, that that is not the same thing as believing in it. The fact is, the vast majority of mankind shut their eyes to all facts that do not concern themselves. The cruelties, wrongs, and infamous degradations endured by the innocent, and which, even if permitted by man, would arouse our deepest indignation against him, are no obstacles to their faith in Providence."

"Yet the existence of evil in the world," I observed, "has always been a stumbling-block to the philosophers."

"I am not speaking of the philosophers, who, in the first place, are not numerous; and, in the second, who take these things, as is only to be expected of them, very philosophically. That portion of mankind who do not themselves suffer from these enormities, either shut their eyes to them, as being none of their business, and even derive a certain satisfaction from their happening to other people, and not to them; or, still more basely,

acquiesce in them, with some idea of currying favour with Omnipotence—a feeling which is, indeed, at the bottom of many so-called religious creeds. 'Whatever is,' they say, with folded hands and downcast eyes, no matter how terrible may be the abomination, 'is right.' They have even the hardihood to avow their belief in a Gehenna, upon the ground of its necessity for the punishment of millions of their fellow-creatures, who have led bad lives indeed, but who have never had the least chance of leading good ones; they put the city arab and the infant Samuel on the same plane. Now, with those who think for themselves and feel for others, I am well convinced that the permission of wrong-doing on the earth is a much greater hindrance to true faith than all the dogmas that were ever invented."

"And does it hinder yours?"

"It did, most grievously; but now it confirms it. For a long time I was obliged to be content with the aspiration that

> "'Somehow good would be the final end of ill'

—that

> "'Good would fall,
> At last—far off—at last to all;'

but now I am certain of it. Yes, my friend, a future state is necessary: it may be for the punishment of the wicked; it *must* be for the redress of the innocent, whom they have so grievously wronged, and whose cry has gone up to Heaven, apparently without reply; but, above

all, for the justification of God's ways to man. So far as I am personally concerned, I need hardly say they need none, unless it be an explanation of why I have been so favoured. I have been fortunate and happy far beyond my deserts; I owe Him gratitude for ten thousand undeserved blessings, and it would be impious indeed to speak of Him for an instant as my debtor. But I think it neither impious nor displeasing to Him, as I reflect upon the atrocities that are committed, not only in 'the dark places of the earth,' which, as Holy Writ itself admits, are 'full of the habitations of cruelty,' but within a stone's-throw of our church doors, to believe that they demand, and will receive, their vindication."

The fervour of emotion which my friend displayed astounded me, for it was foreign to his character; his ideas, too, not a little surprised me. As regards the subjects on which he spoke, I had thought that what is called the Theory of Compensation had been wont to suffice him, and I said so.

He nodded assent.

"You are right," he said; "but when one has been sentenced to death, my good friend, one looks the future more fixedly in the face, and sees it more clearly."

"But it is not man only who suffers from man's cruelty," I remarked. "The over-driven horse, the starved and beaten hound, have also their claims to consideration."

"No doubt of it," he answered gravely; "nor have I

any doubt that they will be taken into the Great Account. I trust, with the poet,

"'That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.'

It is true," he added, with humility.

"'. . . . But what am I?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry;'

and that, of course, is true of all of us. Yet I cannot but think that in my present state I am not quite 'in the night,' but dwell in a sort of twilight, which permits me to read upon the lessening wall between this world and the next that 'All is well.'"

I certainly had never known my friend so calm and cheerful; if confidence is faith, he had it; and what he had to say upon that topic reminded me of him who

"Preached as one who ne'er should preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

It was only once or twice, however, that he adverted to it. The physician who had pronounced he should suffer little pain had not deceived him; and though it was easy to mark, even from day to day, the change for the worse that was taking place in him, he never spoke of it. On the other hand, he had a strange

fancy for comparing his case with that of others in a similar condition.

As I walked by his side upon the little esplanade one afternoon as usual, he spoke of Cardinal Mazarin's last excursion in *his* wheeled chair, which, in his case, however, was a sedan. He reminded me of how that unscrupulous ecclesiastic had received his sentence from the court physician, and henceforth confined his conversation to the statement, "Guenaud has said it; I must die! Guenaud has said it." Notwithstanding, just before his death he had his beard shaved, and his moustache curled with irons; rouge was put upon his cheeks and lips, and he got himself painted so well that, as his biographer says, "Never in his life had he looked so fair and rosy."

Thus adorned, he had the imprudence to be carried about the garden among the courtiers, who cruelly congratulated him upon his restoration to health. "The air is good for you; it has already produced a great change; your excellency should take it often," they said. The wickedest thing was remarked by the Spanish ambassador, who, looking fixedly at the poor prime minister, remarked to a bystander very gravely, *"Este Señor representa muy bien el difunto Cardinal Mazarin"* (This gentleman reminds me very much of the deceased Cardinal Mazarin).

The recollection of this scene (described in the "Memoirs of the Comte de Brienne") tickled my friend amazingly; he would often revert to it, and even dubbed

himself, though by no means with my approval, "the cardinal." He was as humorous and amusing in his quiet way as he had ever been in his palmiest days of youth and health; but it was not on that account, I hope, that I daily sought his society: that it pleased him to have an old friend by his side was, of course, an all-sufficient reason.

Independently of that, however, his conversation had an extraordinary fascination for me. It exhibited a frankness and candour such as is rare indeed, and which it was impossible to mistrust; while his views about matters beyond our ken, which had all the more interest in my eyes, because, as I have said, I believe them to be typical of a large and growing class, were expressed, not as speculations, but with all the force of conviction. His clearness of vision as to right and wrong was most remarkable. One day, when almost at his last, I ventured to ask him, though I had little doubt of what his reply would be, whether, if it might be so, he would prefer his sentence of death to be revoked.

He shook his head and smiled.

"The only example we have of such a case," he said, "is not encouraging. Remember Hezekiah and the dial of Ahaz."

I remarked that, though the king had certainly not made that use of his miraculous reprieve which one would have hoped for, Isaiah was a little hard upon him for the comparatively venial crime of boasting of his treasures.

"My dear fellow, Isaiah was quite right," was my friend's rejoinder; "Hezekiah was a bad lot. When he heard that all his treasures should be carried to Babylon, and his sons made captive there, he showed himself, under pretence of submission to the Divine will, just such an egotist as those modern religionists whom you and I have so often talked about: 'Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. Is it not good, if peace be in my days?'—a reply which for its naïve selfishness has, to my mind, never been equalled."

A time presently came when even exercise in a wheeled chair was too much for my poor friend. I then used to visit him twice a day in his lodgings. One evening, when leaving him, he struck me as looking much worse than I had hitherto seen him; of course I made no allusion to it, but his eye, which was keen as ever, detected it in my face.

As he took my hand and pressed it—but ah! so gently—"I know what you are thinking about, my dear friend," he remarked, with his old smile. "You are thinking, 'How very much this gentleman reminds me of the deceased cardinal!'"

Those were his last words to me. I said I should look in on him the next morning without fail, and I did so; but it was too late.

"He had another morn than ours."

GLEANINGS FROM DARK ANNALS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE present writer has no intention of "shocking" the public into becoming purchasers of this work—a method of applying Electricity to Circulation of which he has never approved. Remember, however, "we *could* do it, an we would." There lives no reader so bald but that I could raise a hair or two upon him, if I chose, by the recital of horrid stories. My brain is just now teeming with them. It has been my duty of late months —through certain exceptional circumstances, which need not be here explained—to wade through the red Catalogues of Human Crime. The motive which prompted, nay, compelled me so to do exists no longer, but the effect of these awful researches unfortunately remains. De Quincey tells us that he was dreadfully punished in dreams for having benevolently given a wandering Malay a portion of that opium which was his own habitual solace. Every night, through an association of ideas, excited by that contemptible tramp, the great philosopher was transported in imagination (which to him was reality)

to Southern Asia—the cradle of the human race, and the seat of awful images and associations. He found himself fixed for centuries at the summit of pagodas, or locked up in their secret rooms. He was the idol; he was the priest; he was worshipped; he was sacrificed. Let him tell the dreadful story in his own half-humorous, half-ghastly way. "I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Iris and Osiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived, and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud."

I allow that these could not have been what are popularly known and "wished" as "pleasant dreams"; but compared to the nightly miseries that *I* have lately suffered, those slumbers of Mr. De Quincey were Elysian. Crocodiles and pagodas must convey a sense of unreality in their terrors, even in dreams. I do not believe, notwithstanding all his protestations, that the opium-eater suffered as any imaginative linen-draper's assistant would do on the night succeeding a Sunday spent in the perusal of the "Newgate Calendar," and ending with a supper of toasted cheese. The hours of sleep would probably be devoted to his autobiography, as a criminal of the deepest dye. Remorse and terror would hunt

him down in the most natural manner, until detection took him off their hands. Then he would smell rue; he would stand in the dock before the awful presence of the judge; the verdict "Guilty" would be most distinctly enunciated by the foreman of the jury; and all the subsequent proceedings on the scaffold would be carried on with elaborate detail. Fortunate, indeed, for that imaginative apprentice if the demon of dreams was so far merciful; the probability is that he would seem to refuse to plead, and hear the following judgment read against him, ordained in all such cases of contumacy: "You shall be sent to the prison from whence you came, and put into a mean room, stopped from the light, and shall there be laid on the bare ground, without any litter, straw, or other covering. You shall lie upon your back; your head shall be covered, and your feet shall be bare. One of your arms shall be drawn with a cord to one side of the room, and the other arm to the other side; and your legs shall be served in the like manner. Then shall be laid upon your body as much iron or stone as you can bear, *and more.* And the first day after, you shall have three morsels of barley-bread, without any drink, and the second day, you shall be allowed to drink as much as you can, at three times, of water that is next the prison-door, except running water, without any bread; and this shall be your diet till you die." Then the imaginative apprentice would (in nightmare) be pressed to death with deliberation, and suffer the just punish-

ment of reading such sad literature upon a Sunday, followed by toasted cheese.

Now, although the present writer eats no supper, the "Newgate Calendar" is but as a work of the late estimable Mrs. Barbauld, compared with those which have (perforce) formed the subject of his studies for the last six months or so. Crime, ancient and modern; crime, foreign, British, and colonial; and punishments, far worse than crime—abhorrent, unnatural, prolonged—these things have formed my sole literary food of late, and I have only just risen from the banquet. Do not imagine, therefore, that any periodical, however cheap, however profusely illustrated, however bent upon elevating the masses by the sublime engine of Terror, could compete with me, if I only chose to take up that highly popular line, in the cheerful art of chilling the blood and marrow. Given the desire on my own part, and I flatter myself I could make a good many people's nights uncomfortable.

There was at one time exhibiting on a blank wall in London a magnificent painting, designed, doubtless, to increase the circulation of some cheap periodical; the colouring was gorgeous, and the scale of the picture a little over life-size; the subject was as follows: The scene was a sort of domed chamber, of immense extent, in which sat a number of judicial persons, masked. A human figure, doubtless the accused person, tightly bound, was suspended from the ceiling (like a chandelier), and oscillated from side to side of it; the oscilla-

tions, themselves inconvenient, were rendered more so by two enormous torches, placed opposite to one another, into one or other of which the human pendulum infallibly swung at the end of each vibration. His examination was conducted during the interval of aërial passage, when he was not singeing, and his replies (which must have been singularly clear and valuable) were set down in writing by the judges. Altogether, it was an exciting illustration, and reflected equal credit upon the brain that conceived it, the hand that executed it, and the bill-sticker, who had placed it in a most excellent situation in New Oxford Street, where nobody could fail to see it. But as for any terror that the author of that scene designed to excite in my individual bosom—why, compared to certain *real* situations which it (unhappily) recalled at once to my memory, it seemed quite a humane and dignified method of conducting a criminal investigation. If, on the other hand, it was intended as an illustration of the severity of Punishment —to *me,* so recently familiar with the desperate wickednesses which have before now been legally committed under that title, it seems calculated (by its mildness) to bring the fine old criminal laws of our own, and especially of a neighbouring country, into contempt.

What was it, for instance, as a punishment, compared to that of Madame Gamp of Paris (no Mrs. Harris, remember, but a real person), condemned for the murder of no less than sixty infants, and executed on the 28th of May, 1672? "A gibbet was erected, under

which a fire was made, and the prisoner, being brought to the place of execution, was hung up in a large iron cage, in which were also placed sixteen wild cats, which had been caught in the woods for that purpose. When the heat of the fire became unendurable, the cats flew upon the woman, as the cause of the intense pain they felt. In about fifteen minutes——" But that surely is enough, and more than enough, to convince folk that the present writer possesses some very raw material indeed for sensation writing, if he only chose to use it.

Having, however, exhibited his power for evil, let him hasten to show himself to be the harmless being he naturally is. In sober fact, his works have been hitherto of rather a moral and didactic character. He naturally belongs to the school of Mrs. Hannah More; he has written poems (but far from passionate ones) upon the affections; he even thinks "there is something to be said" for the principles of the Vegetarians. The respectable public may feel themselves, therefore, perfectly safe in his spotless hands, even when he takes Crime for his subject. Let them be assured that nothing to raise the hair upon the head of infancy, or the blush upon the cheek of innocence, will emanate from his pen, though it is extracting from the annals of justice. He must write about *them,* because his head (as has been stated) is full of nothing else, and the head has something to do with Literature still, all detraction notwithstanding; but he will set down nothing alarming, nothing shocking; he "will roar you as gently as any

sucking-dove, he will roar you an 'twere any nightingale." For in the hideous Abyss of Crime in which he has been groping, there are some things not hideous, nor even unlovely. There are not a few that are humorous and amusing. There are many that point a moral even for the best of us; while it is needless to say that almost all have a deep human interest. They interest us intensely even now, as we read their written record. But what must have been the attraction of each case at the time of its occurrence! How the coffee-houses must have rung with it! How the newspapers must have teemed with it! How the coachmen and guards of the royal mails must have been importuned by open-mouthed country folks to tell the latest particulars of it! What wretchedness must have been caused by it, not only in the persons who suffered at the hands of the criminal, and in the criminal himself, but what is far worse, in his (or her) innocent relatives or friends!

The romance of the matter lies almost always among these last; the rogues themselves are for the most part commonplace, and (but for the severity of their punishment) unpitiable enough. The chivalric Turpin, so celebrated in song and fiction, is in sober prose a brutal ruffian, who places a most respectable elderly lady on the fire, to persuade her to reveal the hiding-place of her silver spoons; who drinks to such a degree that he forgets his professional engagements, and who robs poor servant-girls in spite of the merciful entreaties of his own companions. The hero of the "Colleen Bawn" and

his devoted foster-brother are, off the stage, a couple of remorseless villains, who quarrel about money, and then denounce one another; instead of merely drowning the lovely Ellen in a picturesque lake, they cut her to pieces, just as the unromantic Greenacre served his less lamented victim, and one of them sells her clothes. It is singular how any halo can grow around such wretches as these, no matter what period of time may have elapsed since the commission of their enormities; but what is still more wonderful, they were often canonized at the very time when their guilt was most apparent. Turpin, for instance, with nothing but his good looks to recommend him, was rescued after death from the hands of the surgeons by the populace of York, who, after carrying his body in procession through the town, re-placed him in the grave from which science had stolen him, and filled his coffin with unslacked lime, to prevent any future profanation of the body of their favourite.

A still more remarkable instance of misplaced sympathy was exhibited in the case of one Hartley, an unmitigated scoundrel and footpad, who was hanged at Tyburn in 1722. Six young women dressed in white betook themselves to St. James's to present a petition in his behalf. The singularity of their appearance gained them an interview with Majesty, whom they informed that if he would but pardon the offender, they would cast lots for which should be the future Mrs. Hartley. The king, however, very properly observed that the fellow was more worthy of the gallows than to be the hus-

band of any of these charming suppliants. Their prayer was the more singular, since Hartley was a widower, and had married his first wife for a reason which he took no pains to conceal.

"She was a worthy woman," he said, "whose first husband happening to be hanged, I married her, that she might not reproach me with a repetition of his virtues."

With such a warning so immediately before him, one would have thought that Mr. Hartley would have been careful to avoid the fatal tree. The very contrary of this, however, seems to be the case with most criminals, and may well be considered in judging of the demerits of public executions. Familiarity with the scaffold always bred contempt. Mr. John Smith, a housebreaker, was hung (upon four convictions) on a certain 5th of December. After a quarter of an hour's suspension, a reprieve arrived, which would have been too tardy for most people, but upon this malefactor's being cut down, life was still found in him, and he was resuscitated. He pleaded to his pardon on the following February, but in a little while appeared *again* in the prisoners' dock, charged with a new offence of the same kind. In consequence of some technical difficulties, the jury brought in a special verdict, in consequence of which the affair was left to the opinion of the twelve judges, who decided in his favour. After this second escape, he was again indicted for fresh crimes, and again escaped the halter by dying a natural death within the

prison walls. Nay, we even find the very executioner, Jack Ketch himself, in the person of one John Price, incurring the last penalty of the law. He had filled his dreadful office for some years, and had probably witnessed the last moments of hundreds of his fellow-creatures, had watched their agonies of mind and body, had listened to their exhortations and their prayers. All this, however, seems only to have rendered the man totally callous. Being a person of extravagant habits, he was on one occasion actually arrested *in the cart* on his return from an execution, and only discharged from custody "by payment of the wages he had that day earned, and the produce of the three suits of clothes taken from the bodies of the executed men"; afterwards he was lodged in the Marshalsea for debt, and "being unable to attend his business at the next sessions of the Old Bailey," he lost his peculiar "Government situation." After this, breaking out of prison, Mr. John Price committed a particularly atrocious murder, and himself suffered death, at the hands of his successor, in 1718.

Such examples as these, of which we might adduce a hundred others, are not only curiosities of crime, but a lesson for our legislators, which they have only just—and very tardily—learnt. A spectacle which was thus lost upon the hangman was not likely to have much moral influence upon a licentious mob, who made a gala of an execution morning. Not half a century ago, there was an average of two of these *per week,* or if the exhibitions were rarer, they were enhanced by the presence

of a proportionate number of victims. Notwithstanding the frequency of these savage festivals, they were always excessively popular; while if there was anything at all extraordinary about the crime to be expiated, the "dangerous classes" heaved and bellowed in front of Newgate like a stormy sea. Upon one occasion, these unfortunate persons paid dearly enough for their brutal curiosity. Two men, called Holloway and Haggerty, were sentenced to be hung on February 23, 1807, for a murder committed no less than five years previously. There really seems to have been some doubt of their guilt, and the excitement of the populace arose to the highest pitch. The crowd to witness their execution was (considering the narrowness of the locality) quite unparalleled, and was computed at 40,000. The pressure was such that, long before the malefactors appeared, numbers of persons were crying out in vain to escape, while their attempts to do so only increased the confusion. The screams of the women were dreadful. From all parts arose cries of "Murder! murder!" and females and children were seen expiring, without the possibility of affording them the least assistance. At Green Arbour Lane (nearly opposite to the debtors' door) a frightful occurrence took place. A pieman's basket (which stood on a sort of four-legged table) was overturned, and the people fell over the basket and the man as he strove to recover his wares. Those who did so never rose again. A poor woman, with a child at her breast, however, forced it into the arms of the man nearest to her, as

she fell, adjuring him, for God's sake, to save its life. The man, himself in great personal danger, threw the infant from him, which was caught by another man; and so from hand to hand it passed, until a good-natured fellow contrived to struggle with it under a cart, where he deposited it in safety till the danger was over and the mob dispersed. Seven persons lost their lives in the centre of the throng by suffocation alone. A great portion fought with one another with the like savage fury wherewith the prisoners in the Black Hole of Calcutta contended for the window. During the hour appointed for the suspension of the criminals, small assistance could be afforded, but after they were cut down, the constables cleared the streets, in which they found nearly one hundred persons dead or insensible. It does not appear that the survivors received any moral benefit even from this. If the example of public executions, however, is salutary, what a pattern population ought we not to have had in those early times! Forgery was an offence seldom if ever pardoned, yet bank forgeries increased in number from January, 1798, to January, 1819, enormously. In the first of those years there were 15 prosecutions for this offence, and in the last, 242! The most venial crime subjected the prisoner to the severest punishment. No wonder the satirist exclaimed:

> "Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
> With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply."

More offences were made capital during the single reign

of George III. than during the reigns of all the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts put together. In the nine years between 1819 and 1825 (both inclusive), no less than 7,770 were sentenced to death, although *only* 579 were actually executed. Unless so much mercy as this was shown, it was well understood that juries would not convict, preferring to violate their oaths rather than thus to purvey victims by wholesale to the shambles of the law. A few years previously, matters were still worse. In 1785, no less than twenty persons were executed at once, before Newgate, and not one of them for any offence which is now capital. In 1789, one hundred and eighteen prisoners lay under sentence of death together. They were brought to the bar of the Old Bailey by ten at a time, and individually offered the king's pardon on condition of being transported to Botany Bay for life. The contrast between such a state of things and the present is still more marked by the following circumstance: The horrors of transportation were then so well understood, that several of these unhappy men refused to receive the proffered boon. Instead of the "Thank you, my lord," with which the prisoner now receives his sentence of penal servitude, eight of these criminals chose rather to die than to be transported. The recorder addressed himself to each, exhorting them "not to treat the benignity of their sovereign with contempt, and so to add, by a refusal of his mercy, the crime of self-murder to those for which their lives had become forfeited." But all was useless; they were re-

manded to Newgate, and placed in the condemned cells. On the same day, however, the chaplain persuaded five out of the eight to think better of their strange determination. The adjournment of the court was then delayed, in hopes of the giving in of the recalcitrant three, but in vain. The warrant for their execution was made out, upon which two out of the three accepted the offered terms. The third refused to do so until the scaffold had been erected, and the sheriff was actually escorting him to his doom.

As a general rule, it was not the mere hanging that the criminals of old objected to, but the being dissected —"teased," as they called it—afterwards. "I have killed the best wife in the world," observed Vincent Davis, upon his apprehension for that awful act, "and I am certain of being hanged; but, for God's sake, don't let me be anatomized!" They had an equal horror of being hung in chains. Jackson, who was one of the chief actors in the most diabolical murder in the annals of British crime—that of the two unfortunate Excisemen in Sussex—was so struck with terror at being measured for his irons, that he expired upon the spot.

The ignorance which is the characteristic of most of the criminals of to-day was, in the case of their proto-types, stupendous. The thought that most engrossed the mind of the condemned was, to remember to kick off his shoes when he reached the scaffold, in order to defeat the prophecy (often uttered against him, probably, in his misspent youth) that he would die in

them. They quite believed in the virtue of their own dead hands applied to warts and wens, and as soon as they were "turned off," it was the perquisite of the executioner to admit persons upon the scaffold to be "touched" for those defects.

John Young, condemned for forgery in 1748, in Edinburgh, having heard that the crown law of Scotland enacted that condemned prisoners should be executed between two and four o'clock, persuaded himself that if he could procrastinate his fate beyond that time his life would be preserved. Thereupon he actually secured the iron door of his room in such a manner that when the hour of death arrived his gaoler could not get at him. A number of smiths and masons were sent for, but no admittance could be obtained; while they were all of opinion that an aperture could not be made in the wall without endangering the whole fabric. In these strange circumstances, the lord-provost and other magistrates assembled together and debated as to what should be done, when it was determined to enter the room by breaking through the floor of that immediately above it. Six soldiers descended in this manner, and after a sharp conflict the unhappy man was secured and carried to execution. This instance is remarkable as contrasting with the accurate understanding displayed nowadays, even by the most boorish criminals, of the state of the law and of all things that affect their individual offence.

Prisoners of a higher class sometimes adopted scarcely less curious methods for the preservation of their lives.

Gahagan and Conner, condemned "for diminishing the current coin of the realm," about the same time as Young, composed poetical addresses, the one, "To the Duchess of Queensberry," and the other, "To His Royal Highness Prince George" (afterwards King George III.), eldest son to Frederick, Prince of Wales, on his acting the part of Cato at Leicester House.

> "Hail, little Cato, taught to tread the stage,
> Awful as Cato of the Roman age;
> How vast the hopes of thy maturer years,
> When in the boy such manly power appears."

If ever flattery was excusable, it certainly was so in the case of this unhappy poet, about whose verses, nowhere absolutely contemptible, there is a real pathos at the conclusion. About to prophesy all sorts of glory to the future monarch, the author is overwhelmed by his own immediate wretchedness:

> "The captive Muse forbids the lays,
> Unfit to stretch the merit I would praise.
> Such at whose heels no galling shackles ring
> May raise the voice and boldly touch the string;
> But I, cramped hand and foot, in gaol must stay,
> Dreading each hour the execution day;
> Nor will my Pegasus obey the rod,
> With massy iron barbarously shod;
> Thrice I essayed to force him up the height,
> And thrice the painful gyves restrained his flight."

The same author also, while in gaol, translated Pope's "Messiah" into Latin verse, and dedicated it to the then prime minister, the Duke of Newcastle. But neither Ancient nor Modern muse availed him. The only Merci-

ful Institution of those good old times was the Gaol Fever.

These things are sad to read of, albeit the comparison of Now with Then should fill us with cheerful joy —and all but the morbid are glad to escape from them. It will be the aim of this writer to confine his future chapters, as much as possible, to the more curious Leaves of these dark Annals; to narrations of mystery, of humour, and of pathos, leaving "the triple tree" and its sad fruit untouched. No chronological order will be preserved in the narrations; but in order to start with dignity, I propose to commence with a couple of historical inquiries—"Who killed Charles I.? And was his royal body hung in chains at Tyburn?"*

* The site of the famous "Tree" is now occupied by a house in Connaught Square.

WAS KING CHARLES HUNG IN CHAINS?

A VERY excellent, but not altogether novel, riddle inquires of us: "Where did the executioner of Charles I. get his dinner upon that fatal day, and of what did it consist?" to which the ridiculous answer is returned: "He took a chop at the King's Head in Westminster." But although we have long possessed this unnecessary detail of his proceedings, yet, at the period of the event in question, not only was little known concerning this bloody minister of the law—if Law it was—but even his very identity was disputed.

Among the nine-and-twenty regicides put upon their trial appears the name of William Hulet, accused not only of imagining and compassing his late majesty's death, but of being the very man who struck the blow. It had fared ill enough with all the prisoners whose trial had preceded his own, and it was not likely that Hulet—the man of the bloody hand—should escape from any absence of Crown evidence. There was plenty of that at the Old Bailey, October 10, 1660. Since the

king himself had been put to death illegally, his enemies were not to escape through the overstraining of mercy or fairness. The judicial proceedings, says Ludlow, "were purposely delayed during the time Mr. Love was to continue sheriff of London; he being no way to be induced, either for fear or hopes, to permit juries to be packed in order to second the designs of the Court. But after new sheriffs had been chosen more proper to serve the present occasion, a commission for hearing and determining the matter was directed to thirty-four persons, of whom fifteen had actually engaged for the Parliament against the late king." If the zeal of the apostate is to be feared by his former friends, the regicides certainly stood in peril. The Duke of Albemarle, late Colonel George Monk, was one of this special commission; he who afterwards "not only acquiesced in the insults so meanly put upon the corpse of Blake, under whose auspices and command he had performed the most creditable services of his life, but, in the trial of Argyle, produced letters of friendship and confidence to take away the life of a noble man, the zeal and cordiality of whose co-operation with him, proved by such documents, was the chief ground of his execution." The Earl of Manchester and Denzil Hollis, Esq., were also on the commission, formerly two of the six members designed for execution by the late king, personally concerned in the Great Quarrel, and "who had contributed the utmost of their endeavours to engage divers of the gentlemen (upon whom they were now to sit as judges)

on that [the Parliamentary] side." Mr. Arthur Annesley had actually been a member of the Parliament whilst it had made war upon the king; Finch, condemned for high treason twenty years before, had only escaped by flight; while Sir Oliver Bridgeman, "who, upon his submission to Cromwell, had been permitted to practise the law in a private manner, and under that colour had served both as spy and agent for his master, was intrusted with the principal management of the tragical scene."

Even in that awful trial-scene, but a few years before, in revenge for which the present proceedings were held, there could have been scarcely more strange and powerful elements of tragedy; not only were now the places of accused and accusers reversed, but the very tribunal of justice was, in great part, composed of men who were equally liable with the prisoners to be placed at the bar; while the fickle populace, who, when their monarch was on his trial, so sympathized with him that the soldiers of the Commonwealth could not reduce them to silence, now as openly expressed their scorn of the unfair proceedings instituted against his foes. When Mr. Windham, in a speech of more loyalty than logic, was urging for a conviction: "I think a clearer evidence of a fact can never be given than is for these things," we are told, *Here the spectators hummed;** and the Lord Chief Baron besought them not to turn a court of justice into a farce—as though that transformation had not in reality taken place.

* "State Trials," vol. v., p. 1025.

"Guilty," "Guilty," "Guilty," had been the monotonous verdict of the grand-jury with respect to all the prisoners that had preceded William Hulet; and they had been removed from their places, either at the pregnant "Look to him, keeper," of the clerk of the court, or after the dreadful sentence of the judge: "You that are the prisoner at the bar, you are to receive the sentence of death, which sentence is this: 'The Judgment of this Court is, and the Court doth award, That you be led back to the place from whence you came, and from thence to be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, and there you shall be hanged by the neck, and being alive, shall be cut down .... and your entrails to be taken out of your body, and you living, the same to be burned before your eyes, and your head to be cut off, your body to be divided into four quarters, and head and quarters to be disposed of at the pleasure of the king's majesty; and the Lord have mercy upon your soul.'"

How strangely does the word "mercy" peep out, like a daisy in a battle-field, amid that savage and loathsome sentence. The manner in which the Court "directs," and the counsel for the Crown imply, are evidence enough of a foregone conclusion in all the cases; and to save time and useless contention, several of the accused plead guilty at once, and, like predestinated sheep, are "set aside." In Hulet's case, Sir Edward Turner, attorney to his Highness the Duke of York, *himself one of the commission,* seems to appear for

the prosecution. "May it please your lordships, and you gentlemen that are sworn of this jury, we are now entering upon the last act of this sad tragedy of the murder of the late king. There have been before you some of the judges, the counsel, the chaplain, and the guard; this prisoner at the bar, in the last place, was one of those which came with a frock on his body and a vizor on his face to do the work. . . . And we doubt not to pluck off his vizor by-and-by." With this delicate joke, the proceedings involving the life or death of the accused person commence.

One Richard Gittens, being formerly in the same regiment as the prisoner, and a sergeant, as *he* also was at that time, states that about two or three days before the king's execution their colonel, Hewson, sent for thirty-eight of his comrades, including the prisoner and himself, and having sworn them all to secrecy, inquires which of them will undertake the headsman's duty; adding, that whosoever does so shall receive a hundred pounds down, and preferment in the army. "All refused, and we thought Captain Hulet did refuse." However, at the execution, the witness, "bustling to get near" the scaffold, sees Hulet, "as far as he can guess, falling on his knees to ask forgiveness of the king before striking the fatal blow. He thought it was he by his speech. Captain Atkins thought so too. 'I told him (Atkins) I would not do it for all the city of London.'

"'No, nor I either for all the world,' saith Atkins;

'but you shall see Hulet quickly come to preferment;' and presently after he was made captain-lieutenant."

The counsel inquires whether the witness recognised Hulet in any other respect beside his voice.

"He had a pair of frieze trunk breeches, and a vizor with a gray beard; and after that time Colonel Hewson called him 'Father Graybeard,' and most of the army likewise; he cannot deny it."

Hulet does, however, resolutely deny it.

Stammers, another witness, states that nine years after the execution, the prisoner having known him but for two days, sent for him to his chamber, and confessed to him: "I was the man that beheaded King Charles, and for doing it I had a hundred pounds; I was a sergeant at that time."

The accused, denying this, asks who it was that was sent for him, and Stammers cannot remember, "it was so long ago." Captain Toogood being sworn, deposes that at the White Horse in Carlow he asked the prisoner, whom he had been told had cut the king's head off, whether that was true or no. "He told me it was true; that he was one of the two persons that were disguised upon the scaffold. I asked him, what if the king had refused to submit to the block? Saith he: 'There were staples placed about the scaffold, and I had that about me which would have compelled him.' It was generally reported in Ireland that he was the man that cut off the king's head, or that held it up, and I have sometimes heard him called Grandsire Graybeard. On one

occasion, being accused thereof, he replied: 'Well, what I did I will not be ashamed of; if it were to do again, I would do it.'"

One Walter Davis deposes to have asked the accused this same question, and to have received for answer: "Sir, it was a question I never resolved any man, though often demanded; yet whosoever said it then, it matters not, I say it now—it was the head of a traitor."

Colonel Nelson witnesses to having had a conversation with Colonel Axtell (a regicide already condemned) as to the matter in question. "Axtell said I knew those two disguised persons on the scaffold as well as himself; they have been upon service with you many a time. We pitched upon two stout fellows. It was Walker and Hulet. Who gave the blow? said I. Saith he: Poor Walker, and Hulet took up the head. I am not sure whether they had thirty pounds apiece, or thirty pounds between them." Colonel Tomlinson cannot swear to the precise garments of the masked men on the scaffold. "They had, however, close garments to their bodies; they had hair on their faces; one was gray, the other was flaxen. I think he with the gray hair struck the blow."

Benjamin Francis is a very eager witness. "My lords and gentlemen of the jury, as to the prisoner at the bar, he was very active in that horrid act. There was two of them had both cloaths alike. They were in butcher's habits of woollen. One had a black hat and

black beard, and the other a gray grisled periwig hung very low. I affirm that he who cut off the king's head was in the gray periwig, and I believe this was about that man's stature (pointing to Mr. Hulet), and his beard was of the same colour, if he had any."*

Counsel here begs to observe that fuller evidence cannot be expected than that which has been given. The prisoner has heard all the witnesses; what has he to say for himself?

With respect to this fulness of evidence, it has been certainly sufficiently amplified, the few pertinent sentences we have extracted being selected from a mass of irrelevant and hearsay matter. The inquiry concerning his majesty's execution, indeed, resembles nothing so much as the evidence in another pathetic story, which has drawn many tears from simple eyes, namely, "Who killed Cock Robin?" There is the Fly with his little eye, and he saw him die over and over again; there is even the Fish who caught his blood, in the person of many who dipped their handkerchiefs in the sacred stream; but, after all, nobody can point out the murderer. There is no confession of the Sparrow, to make matters easy, as in Cock Robin's case. On the contrary, the prisoner states that he could prove an alibi, if only he may be allowed time to send for certain witnesses; that he has been in confinement, and unable to procure them hitherto; that so far from cutting the king's head

* Conceive what would become of such loose statements as these in a modern court of justice, and under cross-examination!

off, he was imprisoned with nine other sergeants for refusing to be upon the scaffold. He demands that the prisoners be put upon oath as to who did the deed with which he stands charged, for that they could clear him.

The Lord Chief Baron conceives that that would be a pretty thing indeed; "notwithstanding, it is supposed there are some in court that can say something tending to the information of the jury, *but they are not to be admitted upon oath against the king.*"

Hereupon, a sheriff-officer (but an honest fellow, one would think) voluntarily comes forward, and in the usual loose fashion evidences that he knows a man, one John Rooten, who told him that he was in Rosemary Lane a little after the execution, drinking with the common hangman, Gregory Brandon, and urging him whether he did this deed.

"God forgive me," saith the hangman; "I did it, and I had forty half-crowns for my pains."

A second witness, one Abraham Smith, a waterman, furnishes some very curious but admirably natural matter.

"My lord, so soon as that fatal blow was given, I was walking about Whitehall, down came a file of musketeers. The first word they said was this: Where be the bargemen? Answer was made: Here are none. Away they directed the hangman into my boat. Going into the boat, he gave one of the soldiers half-a-crown. Said the soldiers: Waterman, away with him, begone

quickly. But I fearing this hangman had cut off the king's head, I trembled that he should come into my boat, but dared not to examine him on shore for fear of the soldiers; so out I launched, and having got a little way in the water, said I: Who the Devil have I got in my boat? Says my fellow, says he: Why? I directed my speech to him, saying: Are you the hangman that cut off the king's head?—No, as I am a sinner to God, saith he, not I. He shook every joint of him. I knew not what to do; I rowed a little way further, and fell to a new examination of him, when I had got him a little further. Tell me true, said I, are you the hangman that hath cut off the king's head? I cannot carry you, said I.—No, saith he; I was fetched with a troop of horse, and I was kept a close prisoner at Whitehall, and truly I did not do it; I was kept a close prisoner all the while; but they had my instruments.—I said I would sink the boat [O Abraham Smith, Abraham Smith!], if he did not tell me true; but he denied it with several protestations."

No shorthand writer of to-day has probably ever presented us with a piece of evidence more accurate than the above. There is something truly Shakespearian about its dramatic truth. How often must the man have told this tale, with all its redundancies and repetitions, in taprooms and snug parlours! The colouring was probably altered to suit his audience. When the men of the Protector's guard asked him to narrate that singular personal experience for *their* edification, he

probably spared them much of the sentiment. To all unbiased persons, however, Waterman Smith is a witness whose testimony outweighs all the rest, albeit his threat of sinking the boat (his own boat, and himself on board of it) is a little too enthusiastic even for the occasion.

William Cox deposes, more poetically, to the same effect, namely, that it was Brandon who did the deed.

"When my Lord Capell, Duke of Hamilton, and the Earl of Holland were beheaded in Palace Yard, in Westminster, my Lord Capell asked the common hangman, said he: Did you cut off my master's head?—Yes, saith he. Where is the instrument, that did it? He then brought the axe. This is the same axe, are you sure? saith my lord.—Yes, my lord, said the hangman; I am very sure it is the same. My Lord Capell took the axe, and kissed it, and gave him five pieces of gold. I heard him say: Sirrah, wert thou not afraid?—Saith the hangman: They made me cut it off, and I had thirty pounds for my pains."

The Lord Chief Baron sums up, on the face of this testimony, dead against the unfortunate Hulet. The jury, "after a more than ordinary time of consultation," return to their places.

"William Hulet, *alias* Holet, hold up your hand. Gentlemen, look upon the prisoner at the bar: how say you, is he guilty of high treason?"

Foreman: "Guilty."

Clerk: "Look to him, keeper. What goods and chattels?"

Jury: "None, to our knowledge."

It is fair to state that, in spite of the above verdict, the court, "being sensible of the injury done to him," procured Captain William Hulet's reprieve, although we hear nothing of his pardon. The probability is that among his republican friends, and while the Cromwellian dynasty lasted, Hulet took no pains to clear himself of the charge in question, but rather, by affecting a certain coyness, acknowledged the soft impeachment; just as one would not mind, under a Liberal administration, having the "Letters of Junius" imputed to one; while, in the event of the establishment of a despotic monarchy, such a reputation would be dangerous.

It is singular enough, in the case of a monarch about whom there was so much doubt during his life, that, in addition to the above question as to who was his executioner, there is no little uncertainty as to his burial. The common account is that, immediately after his decapitation, his body was embalmed, and buried in Windsor Chapel, in the same vault with Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour. It is said to have been seen again on the occasion of the burial of one of the children of the Princess Anne, in the reign of William III.; while there is a detailed account, with which most of us are familiar, of the opening of the royal martyr's coffin, and the examination of its contents, by the Prince Regent,

in the year 1814. None of these things, however, are incompatible with a curious version of the interment of King Charles's body, which is here subjoined.

In the good old times, whose return is still prayed for by some honest folk, it was customary, upon the restoration of any political party to power, to take not only a great revenge upon their fallen enemies if living, but to commit atrocities upon their bodies, if they had been so fortunate as to escape their attentions by death. Thus, Cromwell's mother, and Cromwell's daughter Elizabeth (a true Loyalist at heart, if we are to believe in historical paintings), and Admiral Blake, with many other not unworthy persons, were disentombed from their quiet graves in Westminster Abbey, by command of Charles II., and thrown promiscuously into a pit in St. Margaret's Churchyard; while against the skeletons of the late king's more prominent enemies, still severer measures were taken.

By the Houses of Lords and Commons, it was "Resolved, that the carcasses of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, John Bradshaw, and Thomas Pride, be with all expedition taken up and drawn upon a hurdle to Tyburn, and there hanged up; and after that, buried under the said gallows." Some say this was carried into effect. Sir George Wharton, an annalist of that time, asserts that these four corpses were indeed hung "at the several angles of the triple tree till sunset; then taken down, beheaded, and their loathsome trunks thrown in a deep hole under the gallows. Their heads

were afterwards set upon poles on the top of Westminster Hall." A note in Kennett's History describes how the sergeant of the House of Commons went to St. Peter's, Westminster, and demanded the body of Cromwell, for the above amiable purpose, and found in a vault in the middle aisle of Henry VII.'s Chapel, at the east end, his supposed coffin, "and upon the breast of the corpse (therein) was laid a copper plate, finely gilt, enclosed in a thin case of lead, on the one side whereof were engraved the arms of England impaled with the arms of Oliver."

But *was* this the body of Oliver Cromwell, after all? Mr. Barkstead, son of regicide Barkstead, executed promptly after the Restoration, deposes to the contrary. He asserts that his father, being lieutenant of the Tower of London, and a great confidant of the late Protector, did, among other such confidants, in the time of the Protector's sickness, desire to know where he would be buried; to which he answered: Where he obtained the greatest victory and glory, and as nigh the spot as could be guessed, where the heat of the action was—namely, in the field at Naseby, county Northampton, *which accordingly was thus performed.* "At midnight, soon after his death, being first embalmed in a leaden coffin, the body was in a hearse conveyed to the said field, the said Mr. Barkstead, by order of his father, attending close to the hearse; and being come to the field, they found, about the midst of it, a grave, dug about nine feet deep, with the green sod carefully laid

on one side, and the mould on another, in which the coffin being soon put, the grave was instantly filled up, and the green sod laid carefully flat upon it, care being taken that the surplus mould was clean taken away. Soon after, like care was taken that the said field was entirely ploughed up, and sown three or four years successively with corn. Several other material circumstances the said Mr. Barkstead—who now frequents Richards' Coffee-house—relates, too long to be here inserted."

In the "Harleian Miscellany," this version is repeated, after which is added the following:

"Talking over this account of Barkstead's with the Rev. Mr. Sm—— of G——, whose father had long resided in Florence as a merchant, and afterwards as minister from King Charles II., and had been well acquainted with the fugitives after the Restoration, he assured me he had often heard the same account by other hands. Those miscreants always boasting that they had wreaked their revenge against the father as far as human foresight could carry it, by beheading him whilst living, and *making his best friends the executors of the utmost ignominies upon him when dead.* He [Cromwell] contrived his own burial, as owned by Barkstead, having all the honours of a pompous funeral paid to an empty coffin, *into which afterwards was removed the corpse of the martyr,* that, if any sentence should be pronounced, as upon his body, it might effectually fall upon that of the king. . . . The secret being only amongst

that abandoned few, there was no doubt in the rest of the people but the body so exposed was that it was said to be; had not some whose curiosity had brought them nearer the tree, observed with horror the remains of a countenance they little had expected there; and that, on tying the cord, there was a strong seam about the neck, by which the head had been, as was supposed, immediately after the decollation, fastened again to the body. This being whispered about, and the numbers that came to the dismal sight hourly increasing, notice was immediately given of the suspicion to the attending officer, who despatched a messenger to court to acquaint them with the rumour, and the ill consequences the spreading or examining into it further might have. On which the bodies were immediately ordered down, *to be buried again*. . . . Many circumstances make this account not altogether improbable; as all those enthusiasts, to the last moment of their lives, ever gloried in the truth of it."

Lord Clarendon himself seems to give some countenance to the above narration. He describes how the body of Charles was exposed, after execution, to the public view for many days; how it was embalmed, and carried to Windsor, "to be buried in a decent manner, so that the whole expense should not exceed £500;" but also how, upon his servants entering the church, with which they had before been well acquainted, "they found it so altered and transformed, all inscription and those landmarks pulled down by which all men

knew every particular place in that church, and such a dismal mutation over the whole, that they knew not where they were; nor was there one old officer that had belonged to it, or knew where our princes had used to be interred. At last there was a fellow of the town who undertook to tell them where there was a vault in which King Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour were interred. And as near that place as could conveniently be, they caused the grave to be made. . . . Upon the return of King Charles II., above ten years after the murder of his father, it was generally expected that the body should be removed from that obscure burial, and should be solemnly deposited with his royal ancestors in Henry VII.'s Chapel." Lord Clarendon goes on to state that Charles II. fully intended this, and gave orders to that effect; but that those who survived of the interment-party being sent down to Windsor, "they could not satisfy themselves in what place or part of the church the royal body was interred." They caused the ground "to be opened at a good distance," but found it not, and on their relating their failure to the king, "the thought of that remove was laid aside, and the reason communicated to very few, for the better discountenancing further inquiry."

Upon this matter, Kennett observes: "It has been made a question and a wonder by some persons why a monument was not erected to the late king after the Restoration, when the Commons were well inclined to have given a sum of money for that grateful purpose.

We are afraid the true reason was that the royal body could not be found; those who murdered it had disturbed it in the very grave, and carried it away, and God alone knows where they gave it any second interment."

Assuming that Barkstead's narrative is a correct one, it might be easily explained how the body of Charles was afterwards found at Windsor. *His own friends had replaced it after the mistake was discovered.* The matter is certainly open to considerable doubt, although the idea of the substitution might have occurred naturally enough to the Cromwellian party, subsequent to the possibility of their putting it into effect, and been used merely to flout the dominant party. Whether carried out or not, the notion of making Charles's best friends the involuntary ministers of his disgrace, while they imagined they were insulting the bones of his chief foe, is not without a certain grim humour. Nor is it possible for nineteenth-century folk not to experience some little gratification in the thought that individuals, no matter of what politics, who made warfare with the dead were foiled.

CHILD-STEALING.

One of the worst features of the British criminal code of half a century ago was the disproportionate character of its punishments. In most cases, it was ruthlessly cruel, but in others it awarded penalties very much too lenient. For offences against authority, property, and commerce, it rarely inflicted anything short of death; while for crimes which steeped whole families in misery, and which are repugnant to every natural feeling, but a slight expiation was often demanded. In 1795, during the passage of his majesty George III.'s state-coach through the streets on his way to open Parliament, the populace expressed their disapprobation of his policy. Among a number of disorderly persons, none of whom seems to have behaved worse than his fellows, one Kidd Wake was apprehended. He was proved to have uttered the treasonable exclamations of "No war, no George!" he was also accused of malignancy of aspect; but this was accounted for, by the witnesses for the defence, on the ground that he had a defect in his sight, which always had the effect of producing a

distortion of his features whenever he attempted to look particularly at any object. Mr. Justice Ashurst informs this criminal, when brought up to receive judgment, that his crime is "most atrocious, and almost unprecedented;" that he might have been convicted of a much more serious offence, but for the mercy of the Crown; and that his case, even as it stood, afforded an admirable instance "of the unequalled mildness of the laws of this country," since anywhere else he would certainly have paid the forfeit of his life.

"It now," he concludes, "becomes my duty to pronounce the sentence of the court, which is, that you be committed to the custody of the keeper of the Penitentiary House in and for the county of Gloucester, and *be kept to hard labour for the space of five years;* and within the first three months of that time, that you stand in and upon the pillory for one hour, between the hours of eleven and two o'clock in the afternoon, in some public street in Gloucester, on a market-day; and that you give sureties in one thousand pounds* for your good behaviour for the term of ten years, to be computed from the expiration of the said five years; and that you be further imprisoned till you find the said sureties."

In the same year, one Elizabeth Hall (a female fiend only second in atrocity to Mrs. Brownrigg), for beating

* The prisoner thus addressed is a labouring-man, with a wife dependent upon his daily work for support; so that the sentence is equivalent to one of imprisonment for life.

two little girls, apprenticed to her by the parish, almost to death, and working them from four o'clock in the morning until eleven at night, on potatoes and salt, is awarded six months' imprisonment for each offence, and *to pay a fine of three shillings and fourpence!*

Twenty years later, the law was even still more lenient towards the cruel—a fellow-feeling probably rendering it wondrous kind in their case—for we find one Mrs. Hunter and her servant sentenced, the one but to eighteen months, and the other to six only, for *roasting* a child.

The consideration of infants generally—but especially of parish infants—seems, indeed, to have been beneath the dignity of the law. Up to the year 1811, you might purloin a baby with comparative impunity, whereas, if you stole a watch above the value of nine-and-thirty shillings, you would be hanged. At this period, however, a child of respectable parents having been abstracted, the offence of child-stealing was made felony, and subject to the punishment of transportation. The particular case which caused this alteration in the statute-book is a very remarkable one. At its outset, it was exceedingly obstructed by misidentification of the offender.

The question of personal identity, in the case of adults, at least, would seem to be one of comparative ease, yet, in our criminal annals, there is nothing more common than a unanimity, among the most well-

meaning persons, in mistaking the innocent for the guilty. Two innocent young men were placed in 1785 at the bar of the Old Bailey for robbing Sir William Davenport (one of the king's serjeants of the Court of Common Pleas) on the Uxbridge Road.

"As far as one man can swear to another," said he, looking full upon the accused, "the prisoners at the bar robbed me, as I have described."

Lady Davenport, as in duty bound, corroborated her husband's testimony. Then came the coachman and footman, who followed with equal decision upon the same side. Upon adjournment to the courtyard of the prison, all these persons swore that two horses there exhibited (the property of the accused) were the same horses ridden by the highwaymen. Fortunately for the prisoners, however, one of them happened to be a member of a respectable club in Kentish Town, the anniversary dinner of which had been held in his own house, on the very evening on which the robbery was committed. An alibi was also clearly established in the case of his companion. No particular likeness appears to have existed between these innocent men and those who afterwards confessed to the crime in question. Bartholomew Greenwood, Esq., rider to the 1st Troop of Horse Guards, was sworn to, on a previous occasion, with equal pertinacity, by a gentleman of the name of Wheatly, as having robbed him in a field near Camberwell; and if the accused had been of a less respectable rank in life, and his witnesses less honour-

able persons, it would have gone very hard with him; for as nothing is so conclusive as an alibi, so nothing is so open to suspicion. Richard Coleman was actually executed for the murder of Sarah Green through the misidentification of him by the dying woman. Being charged with the offence, he had absconded, and hid himself, which doubtless weighed greatly against him with the jury, although he had issued an advertisement from his place of concealment, setting forth his innocence, and announcing his intention of delivering himself up at the next assizes. The memory of this unfortunate man was fully cleared of the matter.

In the child-stealing case which follows, an innocent lady, the wife of a surgeon in the navy, was identified as the kidnapper by several witnesses, on more than one examination, and even committed for trial at the Old Bailey. At last, however, the law laid its uncertain fingers upon the real criminal, one Mrs. Magnis, of Gosport. This woman was the wife of a sailor—a gunner on board one of his Majesty's ships, but who seems to have possessed property very much more considerable than is usually owned by that improvident class. He had been always earning this money in cruising, and hence it happened that of all land affairs he was extraordinarily ignorant, and of a most credulous and simple mind. His knowledge of the female character, notwithstanding that he was married, appears to have been particularly limited. He had a sailor's confidence in the sex, and more than a sailor's ordinary

fondness for children. To have a "little darling" of his own, as he called it (in order not to restrict the matter to sex) was his most anxious wish, and his lady was, of course, aware of this solicitude. I am afraid that Mr. Magnis was not quite so liberal of his savings as he might have been during his long voyages, when his wife may well have expected many little comforts to make up as much as possible for her lord's absence. Perhaps he only waited until, according to his peculiar views, she should deserve them, but certainly, upon receiving, while at sea, a cheerful intimation from Mrs. M. that there was a probability of his often-expressed desire being shortly gratified, he sent her home no less a sum than £300, with a particular charge that the infant should be "well rigged out," and want for nothing; "if a boy," adds he, with modesty, "so much the better."

There is surely a pathos about this simple-minded sailor, given up to domestic affection, notwithstanding that the object of it has not yet arrived, and showering his gold upon no Danaë, but his own respectable Juno. Mrs. M. was eminently respectable, but not devoted to the interests of truth. Notwithstanding the tender hopes held forth in her correspondence, she had in reality no other expectation whatever except that of getting money out of her too confiding husband. No "little stranger" was really looked for; no pincushion was embroidered with the sacred "Welcome"; the services of no Mrs. Gamp were specially retained. All

was moonshine as respected the coming scion of the House of Magnis. In due course, the lady got the money, however, although there was nothing to "rig out." Then commenced a still worse course of domestic deception. Mrs. M. announces, in joyful strain, to her infatuated husband, that their firstborn has arrived; that it is a magnificent boy, and that she has named him Dick, after his beloved father, whom he greatly resembles. From that moment, Mr. Richard Magnis counts the tedious hours—notches them on a stick, perhaps, like Robinson Crusoe, or ties them on his handkerchiefs, so many "knots an hour," in sailor-fashion—until he shall come home and embrace his child.

In process of time, to borrow the words of the poet, "the perils, the dangers, the voyages are past, and the ship is moored in Portsmouth at last, and the happiest of the crew, the happiest of the crew, and the happiest of the crew" is Richard Magnis, senior. When he disembarks at Gosport, however, his wife meets him with evil news. Dick is not at home; he is out at nurse at a considerable distance, change of air having been pronounced essential to that surgical operation, performed by the least professional amongst us for ourselves, called "cutting his teeth." Mr. Magnis would have journeyed any distance to behold his offspring, but he is informed that an interview would be positively dangerous to the infant, whose nerves are but too likely to be upset by seeing his father for the first time. The

leave that the poor sailor has obtained is but short on this occasion, and he returns on board ship with a heart sick with hope deferred. The voyage before him is a very long one, during the whole of which he continues to make the most affectionate inquiries about Dick, and to remit money for his due support; he would be very unhappy, he says, but for the thought of this child: he is buoyed up, as Mr. Thomas Hood would have said, by this imaginary infant male. Upon again returning to Gosport, at the expiration of no less than three years, Mrs. Magnis endeavours once more to impose upon his credulity by informing him that the infant, although a remarkably fine boy, has not yet finished cutting those teeth. This, however, is a little too much even for our sailor. He protests that he will either go to his son, wherever he may be, or that his son shall be brought to him. Under the circumstances, Mrs. Magnis deems the latter alternative to be the more feasible, and sets out, in person, to fetch this hypothetical boy. It occurs to her that the Metropolis is most calculated (by the number and variety it possesses of the goods in question) to supply the article of which she stands in need. It has often been said that there is nothing which cannot be bought in London, and I have little doubt that Mrs. M. might have purchased an infant male of the proper age, and required speaking-likeness to her husband (for that is always a matter of opinion), at a very reasonable figure. This lady, however, is either unacquainted with the locality

in which such things are to be procured, or she is unwilling to part with the money; at all events, she does not go into the infant-market at all, but *steals* a child.

Passing down St. Martin's Lane, she set her eyes on Master Thomas Dellew (the very article in all respects which she wanted), playing with his little sister at "keeping a shop" in the gutter, established to supply the Public with the freshest dirt-pies, and, by great good-fortune, immediately opposite a greengrocer's stall. Into this establishment Mrs. Magnis inveigled the children by promises of apples. Having thus gained their confidence, she proposed to the little girl to have a race to the nearest pastrycook's shop, which the young lady won with ease; but upon turning round to look for her adversary, behold she had distanced her altogether. Mrs. Magnis had gone off in another direction with the poor little boy!

Master Dellew's disappearance made an immense sensation in London. Many mothers would never lose sight of their children, even for a moment, in consequence; while a few, on the contrary, encouraged in their offspring a taste for the manufacture of dirt-pies. The officers of the law were extraordinarily active in apprehending the wrong persons, and the greengrocer and his assistants equally prompt in swearing to their identity. At length, however, the bereaved parents received intelligence which took the father down by the next coach to Gosport, and he returned with the

missing boy, alive and well. The child had fortunately certain marks about him, which Mrs. Magnis, in her very cursory examination of him in St. Martin's Lane, had not perceived, and a handbill having been published of his description, inevitably led to his detection; for Magnis *Père* (as he thought himself) was for ever triumphantly exhibiting the child to all his friends, and doubtless pointing out its blemishes as particular beauties. He had felt the strongest parental affection for the boy (who had also been mightily taken with *him*, and seemed rather to enjoy the variety in his domestic life than otherwise); and when the imposition was made clearly manifest, the simple sailor was greatly affected at having to part with him. Mrs. Magnis herself was committed to Winchester Gaol, and thereby escaped even the slight punishment at that time awarded for her offence; for being brought to trial at the assizes for Hampshire, her counsel protested against the illegality of her commitment—the offence having been committed in London, and not in Hampshire—and easily procured her acquittal.

A case most remarkably similar to the above occurred in 1815. A poor beggar-woman, with twins in her arms, and a child of five years old accompanying her, was robbed in open day of one of her twins by a strange woman, who had offered to carry it under pretence of charity. Indigent as was the mother, and burdened with five other children, she immediately spent all she had in advertisements with a

description of the thief, which six weeks afterwards had the desired effect. Sarah Stone, the offender, was identified on board a ship in the Thames, with the missing child in her arms.

"Oh, let me have a kiss of my baby!" cried the mother, overjoyed at seeing it once more.

But a sailor who was standing by exclaimed: "No; not if you were the Queen of England!" For exactly as in the case of Richard Magnis, he firmly believed it to be his own little daughter (having been imposed upon by his wife in a similar manner), and swore to the same, with great tenacity, at the subsequent trial. In this case, however, the poor baby was not returned in such good condition, and died very shortly after its restitution. The law with respect to child-stealing had, as has been above stated, been rendered more rigorous since the case of Harriet Magnis, and Sarah Stone was sentenced to seven years' transportation.

MODERN AMAZONS.

EVER since the days of Queen Thalestris there have been ladies who have aspired to be gentlemen, and despised their own position, no matter by what complimentary terms—such as "Better Halves," "The Gentler Portion of Creation," "Guardian Angels," etc.—their sex has been designated. Joan of Arc, we are told, could not restrain herself from putting on the male armour that was so ensnaringly placed in her dungeon, although she knew that she would be burned for it. Her passion for wearing the Unwhisperables was not to be controlled.

Metaphorically speaking, and in the sense of wishing to rule, thus it has ever been and is with all her sisterhood, as every married man is well aware; but the actual induement of the garments in question is comparatively rare. The ladies who have gone to that length are generally, it seems, not only strong-minded, but strongly built, with a turn for warfare as decided as Joan herself; and they commonly enlist in one of the two military services, of which the army is the more

popular, in spite of that rapid naval promotion of the female sailor with which we are all familiar through ballad:

"Which when the captain comed for to hear on't,
Very much applauded o' what she'd done,
And he made her the first-lieutenant
Of the gallant *Thunder-bomb.*"

With the maiden name of Mrs. Christian Davies we have not been able to acquaint ourselves, but she was born in Dublin about 1667, the daughter of a brewer, at that period in good circumstances, but who afterwards lost all his property as well as his life (in the battle of Aghrim) through adherence to James II.

Of her early years we know little, but it is on record that she preferred a country life to residence in town, was expert in following the plough and using the flail, and greatly given to riding horses across country without a side-saddle, or indeed *any* saddle, nor did she sit sideways. In Ireland such eccentricities are easily pardoned, and she found a suitor in the Rev. Thomas Howel, Fellow of Dublin College, her first cousin, by whom, however, she was discreditably jilted. She afterwards married Richard Welsh, a person in humbler circumstances, and by him had three children. On a certain day her husband, having gone to pay a brewer some money, failed to return; and all inquiries being without effect, he was given up by his inconsolable widow as having been privately murdered. At the expiration of a year, however, she received a letter

from him, relating how he had been inveigled, while intoxicated, on board a transport-ship, and had joined the army in Flanders as a recruit.

On the receipt of this intelligence, Mrs. Welsh placed her children with a nurse, dressed herself in a suit of her husband's clothes, and enlisting under the name of Christopher Welsh, herself set sail for the scene of war. She found the army at Landen, on the eve of a general engagement, in which she took part with distinguished courage, and was recompensed with a musket-ball in the foot, which incapacitated her from service for two months. After that she was taken prisoner by the French, but soon exchanged. Her solicitude for the concealment of her sex led her to pretend to the character of a gay Lothario, and she challenged and dangerously wounded a rival suitor for the hand of a burgher's daughter at Gorkum, for which offence she was discharged from her regiment. Enlisting in Lord John Haye's dragoons, the honours of paternity were forced upon her by an untruth-speaking damsel of Namur, and she paid for the infant's maintenance without grudging, since, strangely enough, such a charge established her reputation. She could hear no tidings of her husband throughout the campaign, but liked her mode of life so well that, after a short residence at home, she again rejoined the same regiment, and was present with it in all the principal engagements of 1702 and 1703 under the Duke of Marlborough. She was shot in the hip at the battle of

Donauwörth in such a manner that the ball could never be extracted, and yet, though remaining in the hospital at Schellenberg for many weeks, her sex was not discovered.

On the field of Höchstädt she recognised her husband—whom she had not seen for twelve years—in a regiment brigaded with her own, and after the contest revealed herself to his astonished but not altogether delighted eyes. He had been married in the interval to a Dutchwoman, and gave our heroine to understand that he was very well content with his present spouse. Mrs. Welsh the first, being a person of high spirit, did not stoop to supplication, but, on the contrary, promised the faithless Richard the sharp edge of her dragoon's sword if he ever ventured to breathe a word of her secret; and yet, singularly enough, the dissevered pair were excellent comrades, and as such seem to have enjoyed one another's society.

At the battle of Ramillies, a shell struck this gallant lady on the head and fractured her skull, upon which she was compelled to be trepanned, and while under treatment, her sex was at last discovered. She was in consequence dismissed from the military service, and undertook the duties of the camp-kitchen, the officers of her late regiment furnishing her with all the requisites of female attire. These may be said to have been her second *trousseau,* for her husband being killed in action, she almost immediately wedded one Hugh Jones, a grenadier, who in his turn fell in the attack on St. Ve-

nant, a few weeks afterwards. On the conclusion of the war, Mrs. Jones was presented by the Duke of Argyle, her commander, to the queen, from whom she received a considerable gratuity. On her return to Ireland, she found her mother yet alive—upwards of a hundred years old—but two of her three children had died. In Dublin she was married for the third time to a soldier named Davies, for whom she obtained a situation in Chelsea Hospital; while, in addition to the bounty above alluded to, the Government awarded a small pension to her for life.

The above lady was exceptionally fortunate in her career. The assumption of the masculine apparel, without being absolutely criminal, yet seldom fails to bring its fair wearers into collision with the law; it also subjects them to oppression, as in the following case, from any unprincipled person who may chance to have discovered their secret. In 1731, a girl named Mary East was engaged to be married to a young man, for whom she entertained the strongest affection; but upon his taking to evil courses, or, to tell the whole truth, being hanged for highway robbery, she determined to run no risk of any such disappointment from the opposite sex in future. A female friend of hers having suffered in some similar manner, and being of the like mind with herself, they agreed to pass for the rest of their days as man and wife, in some place where they were not known. The question of which should be the

husband was decided by lot in favour of Mary East, who accordingly assumed the masculine habit, and under the name of James How took a small public-house at Epping for himself and consort. Here, and subsequently at other inns, they lived together in good repute with their neighbours for eighteen years—during which neither experienced the least pang of marital jealousy—and realized a considerable sum of money. The supposed James How served all the parish offices without discovery, and was several times a foreman of juries. While occupying the White Horse at Poplar, however, his secret was discovered by a woman who had known him in his youth, and from that time the happy couple became the victims of her extortion. First five, then ten, then one hundred pounds were demanded as the price of her silence, and even these bribes were found to be insufficient. At last, however, the persecutor pushed matters too far, and killed the goose that laid such golden eggs. James brought the whole matter before a magistrate, and attired, awkwardly enough, in the proper garments of her sex, herself witnessed against the offender, who was imprisoned for a considerable term. Exposure, however, of course followed upon the trial, and the White Horse had to be disposed of, and the landlord and landlady to retire from public life into retirement. After thirty-four years of pretended matrimony, Mrs. How died; the disconsolate widower survived long afterwards, but never again

took to himself another spouse. Neither husband nor wife had ever been seen to dress a joint of meat; nor did they give entertainments to their friends like other couples; neither, although in excellent circumstances (having acquired between three and four thousand pounds), did they keep man-servant or maid-servant, but Mary East served the customers and went on errands, while her wife attended solely to the affairs of the house.

But perhaps the most singular story connected with this misrepresentation of sex is that of Mary Ann Talbot, otherwise John Taylor. According to her own account, this lady was a natural daughter of Earl Talbot, steward of his Majesty's household, and was born in 1778 at the house of Mr. Gosling, the banker, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. After being tolerably educated, she was put under the care of a Mr. Shuker in Shropshire, who behaved towards her in a very cruel manner; her father having died, the money for her maintenance was paid with regularity to this gentleman, who seems to have had no dislike to that arrangement, but only to the charge which it entailed upon him. Having brought the girl up in an entire ignorance of the world, and almost as a prisoner, he threw her in the way of a certain Captain Bowen, in whose company she quitted her guardian's house, under pretence of being placed at a school in London. So completely did she fall into the power of this scoundrel, that when his regiment was

ordered to the West Indies, he compelled her to accompany him on board the transport in the capacity of his footboy, under the name of John Taylor, by which she was ever afterwards known. At St. Domingo, orders were received countermanding their destination, which was changed to Flanders, and the poor girl was forced to become a drummer-boy, under pain of being sold as a slave by her gallant proprietor. "This new position was only mitigated," says she, "by the fact that I was less immediately compelled by it to endure the sight of a man now rendered to me detestable."

Still, when the captain was slain at the taking of Valenciennes, the young woman sought for and discovered his body, and shed a tear or two over his miserable fate. Her next step was desertion from the army. Compelled by destitution, she engaged as cabin-boy on board of a French lugger, which was presently captured by the English fleet. Being carried before Lord Howe, on board the *Queen Charlotte,* John Taylor was in great danger of being hanged as a sailor acting against his country, but his woman's wit made out so good a story that he obtained pardon without the necessity of playing that last card, to be kept for great emergencies; namely, the discovery of his sex. Stationed as powder-monkey on board the *Brunswick,* he shared in the great action of the 1st of June, during which that famous ship engaged three seventy-fours at once, and that so closely, that she was unable to haul up her

lower port-lids, but obliged to fire through them. Our heroine, who describes herself as by no means intimidated under these trying circumstances, received a shot in the left ankle, which gave her excruciating pain, and more or less crippled her for life. After four months of Haslar Hospital, however, she obtained a partial cure, and joining the *Vesuvius* bomb, belonging to the squadron under Sir Sydney Smith, was taken prisoner with the rest of the crew by a privateer near Dunkirk, and lodged in a French gaol until exchanged. Having experienced enough of warfare, Miss Talbot now engaged himself as steward on board the *Ariel,* Captain Field, bound for New York. His commander entertained so high a regard for him that he took him to his own home in Providence State, where a singular misfortune befell him. Miss Field, a niece of the captain's, became passionately enamoured of his favourite; offered to marry him, although it was not leap-year; and when he departed to join the ship, "went into convulsions," so that he had to be recalled to bring her to herself again. At last, he was only permitted to depart under a solemn promise to come back after a single voyage to England, and make her Mrs. Taylor, and that he never did so was doubtless reckoned among the crimes of faithless Man.

But the hour was fast arriving when John Taylor was once more to be known as Mary Anne Talbot. Having left his ship in the Thames, and gone into

Wapping "on a spree" (we use the lady's very words), he and his friends were seized by the press-gang, and after a desperate resistance (in which he got his head cut open) were carried on board what was called by a frightful misnomer "the tender." He had about him his protection as an American, but the mate of the *Ariel*, his rival in the affections of Miss Field, divulged the fact that he was an Englishman. In this emergency, our wounded hero was compelled to demand his release upon the delicate ground of being a female; when the chagrin of the lieutenant who had captured her was only equalled by the astonishment of Mr. John Jones, the malignant mate. Miss Talbot then sent for Captain Field, and made the same confession, and resisting his invitation to continue in the sea-service, although pressed with great earnestness, purchased certain feminine garments, which caused her excessive inconvenience, and began housekeeping in East Smithfield.

From this time, her biography is a record of her attacks upon the Admiralty for pay and prize-money, and upon the Crown for a pension. At the navy pay-office in Somerset House, the people being of the ordinary rude and supercilious type, Miss Mary Anne Talbot made use of language that seems to have given great offence, and which caused her to be brought (in sailor's costume) before the sitting magistrate in Bow Street. This incident, which promised at one time

rather unpleasantly, only terminated in a public subscription for her benefit. A number of good people "took her up" in consequence of the police having done so, and for a little while she was in tolerable circumstances. Many of her benefactors, however, being conventional in their morality, objected to her "smoking and drinking grog more than what became a female," and in particular, to her reassuming her late nautical garb, and seeking the company of some messmates she had known on board the *Brunswick*, and entertaining them at The Coach and Horses, opposite Somerset House, with the money she had received in charity. The grape-shot in our heroine's ankle, too, began to trouble her, "the reason of which," she naïvely confesses, "I imagine, proceeded from the wound breaking out afresh in consequence of my too free use of spirituous liquors." Diseased and poverty-stricken, her case became truly pitiable, until another misunderstanding with the law once more introduced her to public notice. She was informed against, and carried before the commissioners of the stamp-office for wearing powder in her hair without a license. "It is true," confesses she, "that I have worn a little powder in my hair whenever I have had occasion to call at the house of noble persons to whom I have made known my case; but I have much more frequently made use of it in defence of my king and country." The commissioners, of course, immediately made a handsome collection for

her, and the public, as before, made haste to endorse their generosity.

One of the more legitimate uses to which Miss Mary Anne Talbot put the money thus received, was to go down to her old enemy Mr. Shuker, in Shropshire, and frighten him to death. She drew a sword upon him at least, according to her own confession, "and in less than three days he was found dead in his bed, without any previous appearance of illness." A little while after this achievement, she was presented to the Queen, and received from her royal hand some temporary pecuniary assistance. Still, her finances were not in a satisfactory state, and she was obliged to join a theatrical company in the Tottenham Court Road, where her salary for playing Lady Helen in the "Children in the Wood," and Jack Hawser in "Banyan Day," was exceedingly limited. She was like a child in the wood herself, poor thing! and it was generally banyan-day with her. She was even locked up in a sponging-house in Carey Street, and afterwards removed to Newgate, for a debt of eleven pounds. "Stone walls do not a prison make," however, to one like our heroine; she merely remarks upon the circumstance: "A new scene in life now opened to my view, and finding many of my fellow-prisoners of a congenial temper with my own, I frequently joined in parties of conviviality hardly to be credited in this place. These pleasures, however, were confined to a certain time, as my station in

the woman's ward compelled a separation by ten o'clock, at which hour the wards are separately locked." The Society for Relief of Persons confined for Small Debts at last obtained Mary Anne Talbot's discharge, and a pension from the royal bounty placed her for the remainder of her days above the reach at least of destitution.

The above are among the most interesting of Modern Amazons on record; but they are culled from quite a host. The reverse transformation—the putting on of petticoats by a male—is on the other hand a very rare event. The talents of the fair are more versatile than those of the sex which calls itself superior; and ignominious discovery generally awaits the man who would play the woman. The most famous case of deception of this nature is that of the Chevalier D'Eon. This individual was born of a good family at Tonnerre, in Burgundy, in 1727; was well educated, and distinguished himself both as a barrister and an author at an early age. At eight-and-twenty he entered the diplomatic service of Louis XV.; was secretary of legation to St. Petersburg, and so pleased the Empress Elizabeth that on his withdrawal from that city she presented him with a very handsome amount of roubles and her own miniature. He afterwards entered the military service as captain of dragoons and aide-de-camp to Marshal de Broglie. In 1761 D'Eon was secretary of legation to the French ambassador in

London, and upon his chief's departure was actually appointed plenipotentiary in his room, and filled that important office for eight months. He was also made chevalier of the order of St. Louis, and enjoyed the confidence of his sovereign to such a degree that he never lost it throughout his subsequent escapades. When superseded by the Count de Guerchy, however, he took that indignity with such a bad grace, that he threw off his allegiance and published a pamphlet exposing the designs of the French court, and issued such calumnious statements respecting his successor, that judgment was given against him for libel; and not surrendering himself in the Court of King's Bench, he was declared an outlaw in 1765.

Notwithstanding this—and herein consists the real mystery of D'Eon's case—we find Louis XV. increasing his pension, in the ensuing year, from five thousand to twelve thousand livres. The chevalier was soon at large again in this country, and embroiled in political scandal; but about 1768 he disappeared for a long interval from public life; and when he entered it again, it was in the character of a female. The question of the real sex of an individual so notorious became of course a topic of universal interest, and produced wagers to an immense amount. One of these was tried before Lord Mansfield in 1777, in the form of an action brought by a Mr. Hayes against Mr. Jacques, a broker and underwriter, for the recovery of seven hundred pounds; "the said

Jacques having, about six years before, received premiums of fifteen per cent., for each of which he stood engaged to return one hundred pounds, whenever it should be proved that the Chevalier D'Eon was a woman." Large sums on policies depended on this suit, which was decided in favour of the plaintiff, two witnesses, one of whom was a surgeon, having established the fact in question beyond all doubt. These men, however, were gross perjurers, and in all probability confederates of the masquerading chevalier, although he had declared most solemnly, on his last departure from England, that he had no interest in the policies relating to his sex. He caused it to be reported that his masculine education had arisen from a caprice of his father, who had been ardently desirous of male offspring, and being disappointed in the sex, had exclaimed: "No matter for that; I will bring her up as a boy"—a resolve which he put into execution. The chevalier now appeared for the first time in female apparel in Paris, at the age of forty-nine. Her manners appear to have been the reverse of prudish. "I shall be always respectable," said she; "but I frankly own that I don't think I shall ever be modest." Having always been very attentive to the fair sex, she could not refrain from still doing them little services, such as filling their glasses and handing them chairs. She found it difficult, she complained, to make rouge stick to her face, and having formerly encouraged a beard, con-

sumed much of her time in eradicating the same with tweezers.

Very curious is it that all this time there were many persons living who could have put an end to this trickery, had they been so minded; but the fear of court influence perhaps restrained them. On two of the chevalier's old schoolfellows calling on him to remonstrate upon his disguise, he answered: "What would you have me do? they have ordered me to be a woman, and I wear petticoats by command of the King." Certainly, on his attempting to enter the naval service, in his masculine character, he was apprehended by royal mandate, and imprisoned. After his release, he returned to England and gave exhibitions in fencing, in which he was a marvellous proficient. He fenced with the Chevalier St. George before the Prince Regent at Carlton House, and although in female apparel, held his own. At the Revolution, he lost his pension, and petitioned the National Assembly in the strangest terms. "Although," said he, "I have worn the attire of a woman for fourteen years, I have not forgotten that I have been a soldier. I demand, instead of my cap and petticoats, a helmet, a sabre, a horse, and that rank in the army to which my seniority, my services, my wounds entitle me." The petition was "interrupted by repeated bursts of applause," but produced no pecuniary benefit. In May, 1811, the chevalier expired in Milman Street, near the Foundling Hospital, after having been indebted

to private benevolence for his support for several years. His body was examined and dissected in the presence of Lord Yarmouth, Sir Sydney Smith, the Hon. Mr. Lyttelton, and other persons of distinction, when, of course, all doubt concerning his sex was set at rest.

EVIDENCE.

From the most Direct to the most Circumstantial, there are almost as many gradations of evidence as there are of crime; nor is the latter kind less valuable than the former (as it would certainly appear to be at first sight), since what it lacks in the way of identification is compensated for in its freedom from personal spite. There can at least be no malice in a chain of undesigned coincidences; whereas, nothing is easier than the swearing away a man's life falsely. Moreover, it is not to be expected, in very serious cases, that direct evidence should be forthcoming. Murder, especially, demands Solitude and Night as sentinels of its dreadful work. Its appearance without those attendants, red-handed and defiant, is rare; although there are a few examples of it on record.

Robert Irvine, who murdered his two pupils at Edinburgh in 1717, perpetrated the deed in broad daylight and in the open fields, and was distinctly seen by persons walking on the Castle Hill, within half a mile of the spot. A few years before, Alexander Balfour

shot his rival, a pedagogue, sitting in the schoolroom among his pupils. Nor in this case did the murderer meet with his desert, for after condemnation he escaped in his sister's clothes from prison.

The most extraordinary instance of openness, however, in this worst of crimes occurred in 1712. One William Johnson, who had been a butcher, a corn-chandler, a publican, and mate to a surgeon at Gibraltar, and eventually had given up all these professions for that of a highwayman, was greatly attached to one Jane Hunsden, who turned her less diversified talents towards coining only. Being put upon her trial at the Old Bailey, a second time, for this offence, Johnson wished to address her in the dock; and on Mr. Spurling, the head-turnkey, informing him that no such thing could be permitted until "that little matter," the trial, was concluded, he instantly drew a pistol, and, much encouraged thereto by the object of his affections, shot Spurling dead in court. The judges, deeming it unnecessary to proceed with the case of coining, ordered both offenders to be tried at once for the murder; and there being no want of witnesses to the deed, they were immediately convicted, and received sentence of death. It is remarkable that they both pleaded "Not guilty," and resolutely averred their innocence upon the scaffold.

Certainly as the identity of the above-mentioned criminals was established, not less surely has guilt been brought home to others by the most indirect and apparently inconsequential means. When Mr. Blight was

shot at Deptford in 1806, there was no suspicion of the real assassin until Sir Astley Cooper came down from London—not as a detective, but as a surgeon—and at once, as it were, laid his finger on the murderer, whom he had never set eyes on in his life. From an examination of the wound he inferred positively that the fatal weapon must have been fired by a *left-handed* man. Now, the only left-handed person near the premises when the crime was committed was a particular friend of the deceased, and the last man to have been implicated in the matter, but for this revelation of science. He was in consequence arrested, tried, and convicted, and, before execution, made a full confession of the whole matter. There have been many examples of the complete efficacy of evidence of this sort; but of late years, since medical jurisprudence has been taken up by experts as a profession, such testimony has been received with caution. Yet fatal mistakes are doubtless much less common than they used to be, and the indecent haste with which the links of circumstance used to be woven into a chain sufficient to hang a man, is not to be found in modern judicial proceedings. "Presumptive proof," observes the most agreeable of essay-writers, "is a very presumptuous personage. People circumstantially found guilty ought at the worst to undergo only a circumstantial hanging. A gallows should be paraded round them, the executioner should make a circuitous pretence of turning them off, and the by-standers should exclaim: 'There you are, not, indeed,

positively hanged, but circumstantially. You may presume that you are dead; the proof of your being so is not direct, but strong symptoms of an execution are round about you. You may say that you have been in very hanging circumstances.'"

The above remarks are comments upon the case of William Shaw, who suffered at Edinburgh in 1721 for the murder of his daughter Catherine. She had been passionately attached to a young man of dissipated habits, while her father was desirous that she should marry a steady husband of his own choosing. On one occasion the quarrel between them was very violent, and the words *barbarity, cruelty,* and *death,* pronounced by the girl, were distinctly overheard by a watchmaker living in the same stair, and whose apartment was divided from that of the Shaws by a single partition only. For some time after Shaw left the room the watchmaker heard no more of these exclamations; but presently there were several groans, and, being alarmed, he called his neighbours, who, also listening attentively, heard Catherine two or three times faintly exclaim, "Cruel father! thou art the cause of my death!" Upon breaking into the room, they found her stabbed and speechless, with the fatal knife by her side; and upon questioning her as to whether she owed her death to her father, she was just able to make an affirmative motion with her head, immediately after which she expired. Upon this evidence William Shaw was hanged. But in the August of the ensuing year a man who had

succeeded to the tenancy of Shaw's apartments found, in the chamber in which Catherine had died, in a cavity on one side of the chimney, a paper folded like a letter, which contained, in her own handwriting, the avowal of her deliberate intention to commit suicide, in consequence of her father's cruelty. "My death," it concluded, "I lay to your charge. When you read this, consider yourself as the inhuman wretch that plunged the knife into the bosom of the unhappy Catherine Shaw." The magistracy of the town being convinced hereby of the innocence of her father, caused his body to be taken from the gibbet in Leith Walk, where it hung in chains, and given to his family for interment, while, as a reparation to his memory, they directed a pair of colours to be waved over his grave.

An uncle and niece also once fell out upon that unfailing topic of disagreement between old and young—the choice of a lover.

"Young hearts are always finding out
That ancient matrons have no feeling;
While as for fathers—how should gout
Find any happiness in kneeling?"

These relatives were walking in the fields together; a person at a little distance heard the girl say, "Do not kill me, uncle! do not kill me!" and afterwards the discharge of a pistol, which was, in reality, that of a fowling-piece in an adjacent field. The same night she eloped, and left England for a year, when, upon her

return, she found that her unfortunate relative had been hanged for her supposed murder.

But the most extraordinary case of the failure of evidence on record is, perhaps, that of Jonathan Bradford. This man kept an inn on the London and Oxford Road, and bore an excellent character up to the date of the commission of the offence for which he suffered. In 1736 one Mr. Hayes put up at his house, and, in conversation with two gentlemen with whom he supped, disclosed the fact that he was travelling with a large amount of money. These gentlemen, who slept in a double-bedded room, were awakened by groans proceeding from the next chamber, and entering that apartment, were horrified to find their companion of a few hours before lying stabbed upon his bed, with the landlord standing by, with a dark lantern in one hand and a bloody knife in the other.

Such evidence, which could scarcely be termed circumstantial, was, of course, held to be conclusive, although the accused averred that he had entered the apartment urged by the same humane motives as the witnesses, and, terror-stricken by what he saw, had dropped the knife upon the bed-clothes. Jonathan Bradford was hanged, protesting his innocence, whereas the real perpetrator of the deed was the murdered man's own footman, who had decamped with his booty only a few seconds before the landlord made his appearance. This miscarriage of justice is not, however, to be deplored like the others, insomuch as Bradford confessed

to the prison chaplain that he had entertained the same horrible intention as the assassin himself, and upon entering the bedroom was amazed to find that the murder which he contemplated had already been committed by another.

The sort of evidence, however, which is the greatest obstacle to the discovery of crime is Misidentification. Examples of this have been already given in the chapter headed "Child-stealing;" but they might have been greatly multiplied. An over-eagerness for bearing witness is but too common among a very large class of persons, and, we regret to add, especially among females. Having once made a mistake, the gentler sex seem to consider that their reputation demands their "sticking to it," without sufficient consideration for the victim of their virtuous consistency. Sometimes it is the thief whose lineaments they unmistakably recognise, and sometimes it is the property stolen which has stamped itself indelibly upon their memory; but in either case nothing can exceed the positiveness of their statements, until their cross-examination begins by the prisoner's counsel, which, in the good old times of which we write, was not permitted to worry honest witnesses for the prosecution.

In the month of April, 1726, a very curious sight "might have been seen," as the novelists say, by any wayfarers who happened to pass through St. Margaret's churchyard, Westminster—namely, the exposition of a human head upon a pole. Human heads on poles

were more common in those days than these, notwithstanding that our own are called "sensational"; but still this particular one did attract considerable attention, for it was not the head of a traitor. Nobody knew whose head it was, indeed, and the Government had set it up, washed and combed, where it stood, for the purpose of its identification. It had been found in a dry-dock near the Horseferry, Westminster; but there was no clue to those who had placed it there, although what detective force existed at that time was diligently engaged in the matter. Officers also were stationed among the crowd in the churchyard, to take into custody any person who should discover signs of horror unwarranted by the exhibition, and so disclose their guilt. At the present time it is probable that half London would thereupon have been taken up on suspicion of murder; but our great-grandfathers and their spouses were not so easily shocked.

However, even nowadays crimes are sometimes committed on unknown persons, and the public being invited to view a body, it is generally identified pretty positively as being that of five or six different people; nor need this be set down (as it has been) as proof of the frequency of the disappearance of our fellow-creatures from their homes and families, and of the prevalence of undiscovered crime, but rather to the great delight in identification taken by many persons. So in the case of the unknown Head there were many who recognised it very much to their own satisfaction, and

gave the most detailed information, and misled the police of the period to the very best of their ability. After this singular exhibition had lasted four days, it became necessary, for the preservation of the features, that the head should be placed in spirits, which was accordingly done, and the public were still invited to witness it at the establishment of a certain surgeon. Among others came a poor woman from Kingsland, and after a minute survey she pronounced it to be the head of her husband, who had been missing from the very time it had been found. His other relatives were even hastier in their conclusions—

"Regardless of grammar, they all cried, 'That's him!'"

But, after all, it was not "him," for the Kingsland truant was alive and well, with his head on his shoulders, and had only been detained from home by a press-gang, or other emergency of that attractive time. These repeated mistakes obstructed the course of justice excessively, although, at last, the genuine identification did take place, and the real criminals were taken into custody, among whom, and the chief of them, was the wife of the unhappy victim. It is unnecessary to narrate the circumstances of the murder, which were dreadful enough to establish the reputation of any sensational periodical; but the measures which were taken with the supposed murderess were curious and noteworthy. Following, probably, the ancient usage of "ordeal by touch," the peace-officers carried the woman to the place

where the head was exposed, to see what effect it would have upon her. She recognised it immediately, exclaiming, "Oh, it is my dear husband's head! it is my dear husband's head!" (she having helped to cut it off with her own hands). "She took the glass that contained it in her arms, and shed many tears as she embraced it," like Boccaccio's Isabella over her pot of basil. But when they took the head out of its resting-place, to give her a lock of hair, as she had desired, her resolution gave way, and she fell into a fit. Petit treason—the murder of a husband by his wife—was at that time, and up to the thirtieth year of good King George III., punished by strangulation and burning; and although Queen Mary, from strong sentiments of religion, burned her bishops without any previous suspension, it was usual, in mercy, not to roast persons, and especially females, until they had hung a considerable time. Accidents, however, used to happen at the best-regulated executions, and the wretched woman in question, being insufficiently strangled, was burned alive at Tyburn, while her more fortunate male accomplices were hung in chains.

In civil cases, weight is certainly sometimes given to evidence which would be disallowed in criminal procedures, as in the curious case of Fish *v.* Palmer, tried in the Court of Exchequer in 1806. The wife of the plaintiff, Fish, who had been possessed of property in her own right, died nearly ten years before these legal proceedings were instituted, after having given birth to

a child which was supposed to have been born dead. In consequence of the plaintiff not having had a living child (as was assumed) by his marriage, the estate of the wife was claimed by Palmer, her heir-at-law, and surrendered by the widower without opposition. From information derived, after a great lapse of time, from some women who had been present at his wife's accouchement, Fish began to think that the estate was in fact his own, and he brought his action accordingly. It lay with him, of course, to prove that the child had been born *alive*. The accoucheur who had attended Mrs. Fish had died in the meanwhile, but it was proved that he had affirmed the child to be alive an hour before it was born, that he had directed a warm bath to be prepared, and had given the child, when it was born, to the nurse, to be placed in the said bath. *The child neither cried nor moved,* but the women swore that, when it was immersed, there appeared twice a twitching and tremulous motion of the lips. Upon their informing the accoucheur of this, he bade them blow into its throat, which they did, but without any beneficial effect. The question was, therefore: was this *tremulous motion of the lips* sufficient evidence of the child having been born alive? The doctors, as usual, differed; but the jury, under direction, gave it as their opinion that the plaintiff had established his case; and in consequence, he recovered an estate of which he had been deprived no less than ten years!

If this case had been one of infanticide, the verdict

would doubtless have gone the other way, on the ground of insufficient proof.

Of all descriptions of evidence, however, it is needless to say that the worst is intentional false-witness; though it is perhaps hardly so dangerous as misidentification, since the honesty of those who fall into this error intensifies the effect of their testimony, while that of a perjured person is often weakened by his having been the subject of suspicion. In a few cases testimony has been so positive, and yet so contradictory, that judges have declined to direct, and juries to come to a decision. There is no example of evidence of this conflicting kind more striking than in the case of Edward M'Elroy, labourer, a lad of twenty years of age, accused, in 1825, of setting fire to a cart-house belonging to his master, David Woods, near Carrickmacross, in the county of Monaghan. His employer deposed that, being awake at twelve o'clock at night, he heard a noise out of doors, and on getting up, discovered his cart-house on fire, and distinctly perceived the prisoner urging the flames towards the dwelling-house. Thomas Woods, son to the prosecutor, stated that on hearing his father call out that the cart-house was on fire, he ran out naked, and saw the figure of a man at a distance running from the flames.

In defence, Charlotte Woods, eighteen, the daughter of the prosecutor, averred that on the evening in question, all the family, except herself and a servant-girl called Ellen, went to bed between nine and ten

o'clock. These two slept in a small bedroom on the ground-floor, off the kitchen; and the girl having some wearing apparel of her own to mend, she sat up with her, assisting her in the same—unknown to the rest of the household—until half-past eleven o'clock, when, hearing her father rise, they extinguished their candle, and began to undress: she was afraid of their sitting up being known, since he had expressly prohibited any of the family doing so. These two had just knelt down to their prayers, when she heard a stool fall, and turning her face towards a small window which looked into the kitchen, she observed her father take a lighted turf from the fireplace, and go out. The girl and herself then quietly followed him to the door, and actually saw him set fire to the cart-house with his own hand, having previously set at liberty the calf and pig. She then heard him go upstairs and close his door, and, after about a quarter of an hour, reopen it, and give the alarm of fire. In addition, she narrated a conversation she had overheard between her two elder brothers a night or two previous to the burning. One of them, speaking of the proposed crime, said: "It was a good plan to put M'Elroy out of the way." To which the other replied: "Yes: but I doubt my father will go too far; he must perjure himself." She also said that her father had previously accused her of encouraging the attentions of M'Elroy, although his suspicions were quite groundless. Being cross-examined on this point, she declared she had no particular regard for the pri-

soner, but had come forward actuated solely in the interests of truth, and from a desire to save an innocent life. She admitted, however, that she was now living under the protection of the prisoner's relatives, having left her father's house a fortnight previously, at which time she and the servant, who accompanied her, had given information of the foregoing facts before a magistrate.

The servant-girl, Ellen, corroborated this statement of Miss Woods in every particular.

A certain tailor also swore to the prisoner's having come to his house on the day preceding the occurrence, and remained therein from sunset to sunrise.

On the other hand, George Woods, one of the brothers in question, denied that any such conversation as had been detailed had passed between himself and Thomas Woods, and swore most positively that a close intimacy did exist between his sister and the prisoner at the bar. His brother Thomas was equally positive in corroboration of this.

Lastly, a girl named Collins, also in the service of the prosecutor, stated that she was in the kitchen, on the night in question, with Miss Woods and Ellen; that they went to bed in half an hour after the rest of the family, and did not mend any clothes; that she and they were all undressed, and at their prayers, when her master gave the alarm of fire; and that all they had stated of his conduct was untrue from beginning to end.

There must certainly have been a great deal of false swearing somewhere.

The jury remained closeted during that night, and until the afternoon of the next day, when, not having agreed on any verdict, they were conveyed to the verge of the county, and there discharged in the usual way.

MISSING.

THERE is something in human affairs even more terrible than death itself—namely, disappearance: the sudden snatching away of a man from amidst his fellow-creatures, who either know not what to think of the matter, or who have a score of elucidations to offer, not one of which is in the least degree satisfactory. Compared with death, indeed, such things are uncommon, yet, probably, there are few of my elder readers within whose personal knowledge something of this nature has not occurred. At all events, we have all read of such things, and been affected by them more than by any other species of narration, with the exception, perhaps, of ghost-stories, which are scarcely more mysterious, and are open to objections on the score of credibility.

How strangely that episode strikes us, in the "Life of Grimaldi," where his brother, after the lapse of many years, comes to the stage-door of the theatre to see him, and after a promise of meeting him that night at supper, disappears henceforth and for ever. I remember little of the book besides that incident, which

stands out with strange distinctness among the clown's reverses and successes, and the poor tinsel of theatrical life.

Even about inanimate objects that have been suddenly removed from human ken, there hangs some interest, as, for instance, about the Great Seal of England, filched from Lord Thurlow's house in Ormond Street, and cast into nobody knows what melting-pot—made "gold-soup" of for nobody knows whose benefit! I don't feel nearly so interested about that Chancellor's Seal which foolish James II. cast into the Thames, in the malicious hope of interrupting public business, because that was fished up and found.

What a terrible thing, again, is a lost ship; how much worse than any ship*wreck,* which tells its own tale in spars, and fragments, and drowned men cast on shore! A ship that leaves its port, and is perhaps "spoken with" once or twice, and then is no more seen or heard of; one, that not only never reaches its haven, but meets with we know not what fate. We cannot even say of her as of that great ship, which, lying on a calm day in front of a populous town, suddenly heeled over and went to the bottom: "Down went the *Royal George,* with all her crew complete." She may have been blown up, for all that we know. She may have been borne northward, by some hitherto unknown current, and imprisoned in adamantine icebergs, and all her crew have petrified. She may have been carried to the tropics, and been becalmed for months, and rotted, men and timbers; or in some island in those

"dark purple spheres of sea," her people and their progeny may still exist, cut off for ever from old associations, familiar faces, and home, with her planks laid in the coral caves, never more to bear human freight. What a shudder still comes over us when we remember the *President!* What a weird and awful mystery lies still about those explorers of the North, although we know that they be dead, and may see at any time in Greenwich Hospital their last tokens. There is scarce a ghastlier sight, to my thinking, than that little heap of tarnished silver forks, abandoned in those far-away icy solitudes. What despair must have been in the hearts of those who left them there, and pushed on, God alone knows whither!

Of all the evil things that were permitted in the Bad Old Times, it seems to me the press-gang must have been the worst. Conceive the misery that it must needs have caused in humble homes: the bread-winner suddenly carried off, and the wife and children not only made destitute, but harrowed with the thought that he was dead. There was no alacrity in consolation among the officers of his majesty's tenders; the kidnapped wretch might be able to communicate his position, or he might not. A state of things less endurable than even the recruiting in Poland, in as far as the horror of what may be exceeds the pang of the misfortune that is.

The imagination magnifies the unknown evil. I well remember the state into which the public school

where I was educated was thrown, one fine morning, by the intelligence that Bilkins *major* had been sent away in the night—had been carried off home, or elsewhere, and was never more to return to pursue his classical studies. The previous day he had construed his Greek with his usual infelicity; had distinguished himself at football as much as ever; had added the ordinary amount to his tick at the pastry-cook's—and yet, behold he was gone! What had he done? What *had* he done to be withdrawn with such excessive suddenness from the midst of his fellow-sinners? Not even Bilkins *minor*, his brother, could tell us that. We lingered about in knots all day, discussing his possible crime; and if it was the object of our head-master to hush matters up by this secret method of ejection, that object was certainly not attained. Even now, after the lapse of I dare not say how long, a certain weird and appalling mystery clings to Bilkins, with whom I have no acquaintance, but whom I meet going about Lincoln's Inn, to outward appearance a very ordinary barrister. The particular offence that caused his abrupt departure from school was never known, although it must surely have been *one* of those which we imputed to him. If not, it must have been Original Sin indeed—pure Bilkinsism.

In 1723 a gentleman named Annesley was expected by his friends from Rotterdam, to arrive in London by a certain vessel, in which, he wrote, he had already secured a berth. On his non-appearance, a search was

instituted among the shipping in the Thames; the craft which he had described was boarded, and the captain —one Philip Roche—and crew examined. They denied all knowledge of such a person. There was nothing to disprove this except Mr. Annesley's letter, which gave, however, such details as it was impossible to mistake. Upon a representation to the Secretary of State, the vessel was placed under surveillance, and the letters sent by the suspected persons were opened on their passage through the post. A communication from Roche to his wife furnished the clue to quite a labyrinth of nautical crime. In his early career this wretch had driven a tolerable trade by sinking ships which he had previously insured beyond their value; but having been appointed mate to a trader bound for Cape Breton, he had mutinied with others of the crew, and thrown the captain and half a dozen sailors overboard. It had then been his intention to turn pirate in the western seas; but finding his provisions getting short, he had been obliged to put back to Portsmouth, where he painted the vessel afresh, and gave her a fictitious name. Then he traded—commencing with the stolen cargo—but with this hideous addition to his commercial gains, that he was ready to take passengers, with valuable property, to any port they pleased; only when he got a little way out to sea he drowned them; and thus he had murdered the unsuspecting Mr. Annesley. For this, Roche was hanged at Execution Dock; but before that righteous punishment overtook him, what unimaginable misery

must such a monster have caused! what mysterious woe! what fruitless and heart-sickening hope!

A still more curious case, but without its tragic horror, was that of Mr. Duplex, which occurred in 1787. This gentleman, having arrived from Margate by the hoy one day, had taken a boat in the Thames, to be set on shore at Tower Stairs; this was boarded, however, by some persons calling themselves revenue officers, who carried him and his portmanteau, on pretence of examining the latter, on board a sloop lying at anchor. Mr. Duplex followed his property down to the cabin, when presently, upon looking out of the window, he found himself opposite Greenwich Hospital. He was calmly informed that he was going out to sea, and as he could not be put on shore, had better make himself comfortable. Nobody did him any injury, nor even robbed him of his money; but the crew wore his best shirts and other fashionable garments as though they were their own. For three months he was constantly confined in the cabin, nor—although he could frequently hear the sailors leave and return to the ship, and in the latter case, always bringing hampers and boxes with them—had he the least idea at what port it was touching, or even on what coast he was cruising. He was fed, like his captors, upon salt beef and grog, and never made to work, or do anything unpleasant. At length, being permitted to come on deck, he found the sloop to be in the Bay of Beaumaris, North Wales; and the man at the helm telling him he

might go on board a fishing-smack that lay alongside, he did so, and was safely landed; and so ended his extraordinary adventure. The friends of Mr. Duplex, who was a young man of considerable property, had offered a large reward for him, dead or alive; and the Thames had been dragged for his body again and again.

Mysterious as is the sudden disappearance of our fellow-creatures, the interest is considerably intensified when they take a horse and cart with them. Yet that such a startling phenomenon must once, at least, have occurred, rests upon no less grave an authority than that of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." In the beginning of the last century, as the curate of Slœgarp, in the Swedish province of Schonen, was engaged with some of his parishioners in digging turf in a drained marshy soil, they came upon an entire waggon and the skeletons of a man and horses several feet below the surface of the ground. If the place had been always a morass, such a disappearance would not have been so inexplicable, as it doubtless was at the period of its occurrence. There was once, however, a lake upon the spot, and it is presumed that, in attempting to cross the ice, the unfortunate carter, with his steeds and vehicle, fell suddenly through, and were swallowed up. If, as was likely, it was on the way home at the conclusion of the day's work, the whole would have frozen over before the morning, and absolutely no trace have been left to account for their disappearance. The explana-

tion was doubtless supplied by Superstition, for whom a finer opportunity can surely never have occurred.

Another instance of the total disappearance of a horse has happened within very modern times. No less celebrated an animal than a certain winner of the Derby was, immediately after that great victory, lost for ever to the admiring eyes of men. There was some talk of his having entered a Veterinary College—to complete his education, I suppose—but such a course could only be paralleled by a Senior Wrangler being sent to a preparatory school to learn arithmetic. A darker story is afloat, that the noble animal was basely murdered on account of his teeth; not, indeed, for the sake of depriving him of those ornaments, but to prevent their revealing the fact that he was over three years old—past the legal age at which an animal is permitted to run for the Blue Ribbon of the Turf, and therefore not entitled to the honours—and emoluments—he had carried off. The favourite for the Derby of the very year in question had "pitfalls" dug for him, so that he might break his legs in his morning "gallop"; but even that atrocity seems less tremendous than the secret assassination to which the finger of Suspicion points in this case. There has been nothing like it since the murder of the Duke d'Enghien.

To quit horses and return to humanity, however, the saddest disappearance of which I remember ever to have read was that of a Captain Routh of the Indian army, who came home on leave from Calcutta,

to be married to a Miss Ling in Hertfordshire. The better-known case of Mr. Gordier in Guernsey affords a very close parallel to it in many respects; but the fate of the latter gentleman was discovered for certain, while that of the Indian officer was never cleared up, although open to the darkest suspicion. Captain Routh arrived at Southampton, and was identified as having been a passenger by the coach from that place to London. But after having safely accomplished so many hundred miles, he never attained that place, such a little way off, where his bride awaited him. He neither came nor wrote. She read his name in the list of passengers by the *Europa*, and looked for him hour by hour, in vain. What excuses must not her love have made for him! How she must have clung to one frail chance after another, until her last hope left her! How infinitely more terrible must such vague wretchedness have been to bear than if she had known him to have been struck down by the fatal sun-ray of Bengal, or drowned in Indian seas! *Where* was he? What *could* have become of him?

This young lady had a cousin of the name of Penrhyn, about her own age, who had been brought up in the same family, and, although much attached to her, had not been hitherto considered to entertain towards her warmer feelings than those of kinship. But as month after month, and year after year, went by without tidings of the missing bridegroom, he began to court

her as a lover. She, for her part, refused to listen to his addresses, but her mother favoured them, and, plunged in melancholy, the girl did not take the pains to repulse him which probably she would otherwise have done. She accepted, or at least she did not reject, a ring of his, which she even wore on her finger; but whenever he spoke to her, or tendered her any service, she turned from him with something like loathing. Whether this was remarked upon so much before the following circumstances occurred, it would be interesting to learn; but all who knew them now testify, that whereas in earlier days she had taken pleasure in her cousin's society, it seemed to become absolutely hateful to her, subsequent to her calamity.

About three years after Captain Routh's disappearance, a brother-officer and friend of his, one Major Brooks, having business in England, was invited into Hertfordshire by Mrs. Ling, at the urgent request of her daughter. So far, however, from being overcome by the association of the major's presence with her lost lover, Miss Ling seemed to take pleasure in nothing so much as hearing him talk of his missing friend. Mr. Penrhyn appears to have taken this in some dudgeon; perhaps he grew apprehensive that a present rival might be even more fatal to his hopes than the memory of an absent one; but, at all events, the two gentlemen quarrelled. Mr. Penrhyn—who lived in the neighbourhood—protested that he would not enter the house

during the major's stay, and remained at his own residence. During this estrangement, the conversation between Brooks and Miss Ling had Captain Routh for its topic more than ever. In speaking of the absence of all clue to what had become of him, the major observed:

"There is one thing that puzzles me almost as much as the loss of my poor friend himself. You say that his luggage was found at the inn where the coach stopped in London?"

"It was," said the lady. "I am thankful to say that I have numberless tokens of his dear self."

"There is one thing, though, which I wonder that he parted with," pursued the major, "and did not always carry about with him, as he promised to do. I was with him in the bazaar at Calcutta when he bought for you that twisted ring——"

"That ring," cried the poor girl—"*that* ring?" and with a frightful shriek she instantly swooned away.

Her mother came running in to know what was the matter; Brooks made some evasive explanation, but, while she was applying restoratives, inquired, as carelessly as he could, who had given to her daughter that beautiful ring.

"Oh, Willy Penrhyn," said she. "That is the only present, poor fellow! he could ever get Rachel to accept."

Upon this Major Brooks went straight to Penrhyn's house, but was denied admittance; whereupon he wrote to him the following letter:

"SIR,—I have just seen a ring upon the hand of the betrothed wife of my *murdered* friend, Herbert Routh; he bought it for that purpose himself, but *you* have presented it. I know that he always wore it on his little finger, and never parted with it by any chance. I demand, therefore, to know by what means you became possessed of it. I shall require to see you in person at five o'clock this afternoon, and shall take no denial.

"JAMES BROOKS."

The major arrived at Mr. Penrhyn's house at the time specified, but found him a dead man. He had taken poison upon the receipt of the above letter; and so, as is supposed, departed the only human being that could have unravelled the mystery of the missing Captain Routh. Still, it is barely possible that he may not have been his murderer after all; if he were, it was surely the height of imprudence to have given away a thing so easily identified, and that to the very person of all others from whom he should have concealed it. It is curious, that directly we begin to suspect the commission of a particular crime, however dreadful, and seem to recognise the offender, as in this case, the horror of the matter subsides. But, as we said at the

beginning of this paper, Disappearance is, in truth, more terrible than Death, and it is reasonable to hope that the sudden withdrawal of a wretch from the living world—his disappearance at the gaol-gate for ever—strikes a greater terror into the criminal population than the old brutal exhibitions outside of Newgate.

INADEQUATE MOTIVE.

It is not the mission of the gleaner of these annals, in spite of his didactic style, to open up the great question of crime and circumstance. Certain it is, that as most of us are good-tempered so long as we are pleased, so most of us are honest when there is no temptation to be otherwise. It would surely be as monstrous in any of their juvenile royal highnesses, brought up on "the Slopes" at Windsor Castle, to take to abstracting pocket-handkerchiefs, or to removing pewter-pots from area railings, as for any youth of Whitechapel, reared in a "guilt garden," to consume his week-day leisure in improving study, or his Sundays in religious exercises. It is probable that there are at least as many ragged boys in the Metropolis at this moment who are naturally looking forward to Thieving as their future calling, as there are young gentlemen in broadcloth aspiring to Law, or Physic, or Divinity. And yet that is a dangerous theory indeed which avers that man is the creature of circumstance.

In the Dark Annals of which we write, it may seem probable that this theory would receive particular confirmation, since the restraining influences for good—such as Religion, Morality and Example—are, of course, in many cases altogether lacking, and the criminal, Doomed from the womb, ripens, quickly or slowly, with every sun, as fruit for the gallows. No such general conclusion can, however, be drawn. A number of cases, indeed, seem to favour it; but others, too numerous to be mere exceptions, contradict it quite as decidedly. Some natures, as it seems, are so hard that nothing can bend them; others are so elastic, that though they do bend on pressure, the instant that the external force is removed they spring back again to their old positions. One thing, however, is certain and noteworthy: among criminals, it is not the most determined characters who are the hardest to deal with. The will of these persons can be broken, if it cannot be bent; and indeed, when the Law resolutely takes it in hand to be "determined" also, the most apparently Inflexible will, sooner or later, generally give in. The men of impulse, on the other hand, are beyond measure dangerous; they are affected by no consequences; and it is impossible to guard against their actions, since these are caused by motives totally inadequate. One of the greatest objects with the counsel for the prosecution is always to assign Motive for the commission of a criminal act; but, in reality, criminal offences—and particularly very grave ones—are often committed, if not out of wanton-

ness, yet upon the very slightest provocation. Thus, the Marquis de Paleotti, the head of a noble Italian family, and brother of the Duchess of Shrewsbury, drew his sword upon his own servant (who had merely declined to attempt to borrow money for his master from one who had already given him frequent denials), and slew him in the open street. Yet this man submitted himself quietly enough to justice, although bewailing the vulgarity of the country which held the life of a nobleman of no greater value than that of a footman. When he suffered at Tyburn, he obtained from the sheriffs permission to have the *pas* of his fellow-criminals, so that he might die uncontaminated by their plebeian company.

In 1742, the murder of no less than eleven persons was committed in a country-house near Tuam, solely because the proprietor thereof did not allow his son such an allowance as that gentleman considered necessary. Oliver Bodkin, the father, had married a second time, of which union there was a son of seven years old. These two, Mrs. Bodkin, and a visitor of the name of Lynch, were sitting at supper together, when John Bodkin, the elder son, fell upon them with three other ruffians, and killed them all; they then murdered four men-servants and three maid-servants—all the inmates of the dwelling, in fact; and not content with that, they destroyed the very dogs and cats. One of these wretches was foster-father to the boy, and made some attempt to save him, but otherwise there

does not seem to have been a particle of human feeling among the whole gang. They had joined John Bodkin in his execrable enterprise without the least compunction, and without the prospect, or even the promise, of reward.

The curious case of John Macnaughton exhibits a similar inadequacy of motive for the commission of murder, and remarkably displays the frightful results to which an overbearing and egotistic disposition may lead. It is not too much to say that if this man, instead of being an Irish gentleman of good birth and moderate fortune, as he was, had chanced to have been born a Despot, he would have made an excellent specimen of the class. When he was not crossed, he seems to have been an agreeable, amiable and courteous person. "To an outward form," says his biographer, "which was perfectly engaging, he added the genteelest demeanour;" and he lost his money (for he cultivated the gentlemanly vice of gaming) "with a graceful and calm composure." Under this smooth and smiling surface there were, however, unfathomable depths of passion. Upon the occasion of a sheriff's officer obtaining entrance into his house, he was cast into such a whirlwind of rage that his poor wife, who chanced to be in a delicate situation, was literally frightened to death—a circumstance which threw him into "such a distraction," that he withdrew himself from society, and did not return to the world and its gaming-tables for eighteen months. The penitent widower had by that time, how-

ever, so far recovered himself as to think of marrying for the second time. The lady whom this broken gamester designed for his second nuptials was only fifteen, of remarkable accomplishments, very beautiful, and the daughter of a country gentleman of property named Knox. Her father being unconvinced of the eligibility of Mr. Macnaughton as a son-in-law, forbade him, as soon as he entered upon the subject, even to mention the matter again, and drew from him a solemn promise that he would not speak to the girl of any such thing, upon which understanding only his visits to the house were still permitted. Taking advantage of the opportunities thus offered him, Macnaughton still prosecuted his suit, and being one day in company with Miss Knox and a little boy (who stood for witness), he pressed her to let him read the marriage-service, while she made the responses, which she did —taking care, however, to make the proviso in every one, "That is, if I obtain my father's consent."

This extraordinary ceremony he chose to consider as a formal marriage; and upon Mr. Knox desiring him to leave the house, he put an advertisement into the papers, setting forth that Miss Knox was his wife, and cautioning all male persons whom it might concern that they were not to marry her. This was replied to by a counter-advertisement from the father, with an affidavit of the whole affair annexed, and signed by the young lady. Besides this, he brought an action in the prerogative court, and got any shadow

of legality which such a proceeding as Macnaughton's might have possessed set aside as worthless. In spite of this, Macnaughton surrendered nothing of his pretensions, but hovered about the neighbourhood of Mr. Knox's house, so that the poor girl "had to lead the life of a recluse;" she could not even get the change of air which her failing health demanded, since this fellow dogged her wherever she went, in various disguises.

On the 10th of November, 1761, having received information that Mr. Knox and the young lady would set out on that day for Dublin in their coach and six, he concealed himself, with three armed accomplices, in a certain cabin by the roadside. One of these men he sent on to watch for the vehicle, and then to return and point out to him in what positions its inmates were placed. Upon the coach coming up, it was stopped by these people, in highwayman fashion; and on the windows being pulled up, Macnaughton ran round and fired into the coach obliquely with a gun loaded with five balls, all of which were lodged in the body of the unfortunate young lady, who expired in three hours. Upon his trial, Macnaughton defended himself with uncommon ability, protesting that he had no intention of shooting "his beloved wife" (at the mention of whose name he wept), and producing a letter written to him by Miss Knox, in which she besought him to intercept her on the way to Dublin, and carry her off: he averred that he had no other object

than to do this, but that, being wounded by a shot from one of the servants, the anguish so distracted him, that he fired at he knew not whom, and had the misfortune to destroy the person dearest to him in all the world. This letter, however, was proved to be a forgery of his own, while the detailed information which had been given him as to what part of the coach Miss Knox was occupying seems to dispose of his innocence of intention. The jury, at all events, found him "guilty" without the least hesitation. This verdict Macnaughton received with indifference, only he besought the court to have mercy upon his accomplice Dunlap (the other two having made their escape), who was a tenant of his own, and *had been induced to join in his enterprise upon the promise of the renewal of a lease which was just expiring.* Both were sentenced to be hanged; but such was the popularity of Mr. Macnaughton that no carpenter could be found to make the gallows, which was accordingly constructed "by an uncle of the young lady and another gentleman." The sheriff was even obliged to take soldiers to a smith's shop and force him to take off the criminal's "bolts," without which it would have been illegal to execute him. After all, the rope broke, and let Macnaughton down among the people, who fled to right and left, in hopes to favour his escape; but the executioner having borrowed (!) the second rope of Dunlap, the sentence was eventually carried out. To this miserable end was this gentleman brought, in his eight-and-thirtieth year,

through a sort of petulant passion, an impatience of denial truly childish.

But perhaps the most curious instance of inadequacy of motive is that exhibited by Phineas Adams, who suffered what may well be called torture, both severe and prolonged, in order to avoid serving as a militiaman. In 1812, which was the date of Adams's volunteer martyrdom, I suppose the militia was a less agreeable service than it is now. Not many years before, indeed, Brighton—the now chosen theatre for the evolutions of thousands of willing and unpaid soldiers—was the scene of the execution of two of the Oxfordshire militia for mutiny. Two were shot, and three others received three hundred lashes each; "these were all they received *then*," observes the narrator, "as, from their long durance and consequent weakness, the surgeon of the regiment pronounced that they could suffer no more." During the infliction of these punishments, artillery were stationed with lighted matches in the rear of the Oxfordshire, to prevent any attempt at rescue, while the Colestown Hill was held by two thousand cavalry. A convincing illustration, truly, of the general content and cheerful discipline which prevailed in those good old times. Still, it does not appear that Phineas Adams suffered any wrong, or had anything to complain of as a private of the 1st Somersetshire regiment of militia. In the beginning of the year, however, he applied for surgical aid, in consequence of an ulceration on his arm, which, it was quite evident, he had himself occasioned by

a course of persevering blistering. Upon his recovering in spite of himself, and failing to obtain his discharge, he deserted from the regiment, and being apprehended, was lodged in Taunton Gaol. On the 24th of April he managed to have an excellent fall down some stone steps, severely injuring a person ascending them, and coming to the ground with such violence as to cause the blood to ooze from his own ears. This, a day or two afterwards, caused him to become stone-deaf. His medical attendant, however, suspecting his ingenious design, inquired of him, in a subdued whisper, whether he really was so very deaf, to which the patient indiscreetly answered: "Very deaf indeed." Upon this, he was informed that he was "malingering," and that "it wouldn't do," whereupon Private Phineas Adams immediately fell into a state of profound insensibility, and remained in it for about fifteen weeks.

Every disagreeable method of arousing him was tried in vain. His head and back were profusely blistered; snuff, cheap, but strong, was thrust up his nostrils, and pungent salts applied, without any effect whatever. They then tried "nitrous oxide gas, the operation of which," remarks our hero's biographer, "is known to occasion so extraordinary a degree of mental and bodily excitation." The tube affixed to the gas-bladder was applied to the patient's mouth, but his teeth were so resolutely closed that all endeavours to open them proved fruitless. His lips and nostrils were then compressed, and every means taken to compel him to

inhale the gaseous fluid only, nor was the attempt discontinued until his pulse became intermittent from his ceasing to breathe. When his limbs were raised, they fell again with the leaden weight of total inanition, and all the sustenance he received was eggs diluted with wine, and sucked through his teeth. Various interesting experiments were resorted to, in vain, to excite sensation, "and in particular, the thrusting pins into his finger-nails." In this hopeless condition, the propriety of *scalping* the patient was suggested, in order to ascertain whether the fall, to which his illness, if genuine, was attributed, might not have produced depression on the brain. The consent, and even the attendance, of Adams's father having been obtained, the doctor explained, in the patient's presence, what course of operation was about to be adopted. Adams senior then shaved his son's head. The incisions were made, the scalp drawn up, and the head examined, during all which the young man—he was but eighteen—once only uttered a single groan. No beneficial result appearing even from this, application was made to the regiment for the man's discharge. This order of release was brought to the insensible youth on August 20th. On August 29th, he was sitting with his father at his own home at Bickenhall, with a gun in his hand; and the next day assisted him, as usual, at his day's work. A report having reached his ears that a press-gang was coming for him in consequence of the imposition he had practised, Phineas Adams absconded, nor do we hear anything

of him afterwards. He lived in an age and country that were ill adapted for the recognition of his virtues; whereas the Spartans—for his roguery, as much as for his endurance—would have unanimously elected him to be their king.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE.

"IRRESISTIBLE homicidal impulse" and "kleptomania" are diseases known only to our modern criminal code. No thief ever dreamed of defending his act upon the plea that "he couldn't help it" in the good old times. Had he done so, the judge would doubtless have replied that "*he* couldn't help it either," and proceeded to pass sentence of death. "Irresistible homicidal impulse" was the very thing, indeed, which seems to have then actuated the King's justices, but it was not taken account of at all in the case of the prisoner at the bar.

I am very far from believing that all our benevolent reforms in this particular branch of the law have been beneficial. The strenuous endeavours that are now made to save the lives of those who are proved to be *at the best* but bloodthirsty madmen seem to me to be worthy of a better cause; while as to fashionable and amateur shoplifters, methinks that Want ought to hold at least as good an excuse for a thief, as an Uncontrollable

Propensity for stealing. The disease is confessedly not understood by the Faculty, who are all in the dark as to the remedy; why not therefore try a legal prescription of this sort?

℞ Tred millis: dies 36 de die in diem contin: adhibend.
„ Unguent Pic Okum ter in dies palmis infricand. Sumatur quot. Puls. Dribred in aq.: Pomp.: quant. suff.; ad nauseam—et rep. doz. si opus fuerit.

The law, in order to render a man responsible for any crime, now looks for a "consciousness of right and wrong, and a knowledge of the consequences of the act." Yet, remarks Professor Taylor, Hadfield, who was tried for shooting at George III., and acquitted on the ground of insanity, both knew that he was doing wrong, and that the punishment of death would follow from the commission of his crime; his avowed motive being that he might be put to death by others, since he was unwilling to take his own life. Martin, too, who set fire to York Cathedral, was aware that that act was illegal, and liable to penalty; but he said he had the Divine command to commit it. Macnaughten, who was tried for the murder of Mr. Drummond, was acquitted "upon an illegal homicidal climax (!) occurring at the particular moment when the deceased's back was turned." Under these circumstances, there is no such thing as a murder; there are homicidal climaxes, that is all. Surely it would be well if something of this excessive legal solicitude should be shared by the victim, whose case is considered

at present as of little consequence by comparison—in short, as anticlimax.

A century ago, however, and much later, it is certain that very many persons were imprisoned and put to death who ought, according to the law itself, to have been lodged in lunatic asylums;* but perhaps in those

* There was in 1863, in a certain metropolitan asylum, a very remarkable example of homicidal madness. One of the quietest and most accomplished of its inmates, who had done much towards its internal decoration by his execution of frescoes upon the walls and ceilings, had just one weakness which prevented his being at large—namely, an unconquerable desire to cut throats. He had destroyed his father and uncle upon the same day in this manner, but had no recollection of his own share in that catastrophe; he remarked upon it, indeed, as a curious coincidence, that both these relatives should have died within a few minutes of one another, and of the same complaint. After the commission of this deed, he put a new handle to his razor, and took coach to a seaport town with the intention of embarking for the Continent, and subsequently of reaching Rome, where he intended to perform no less a feat than that of cutting the jugular of the Pope. He did not intend to fritter away his talents upon any inferior object, but a fellow-passenger on the coach exhibited a neck so very tempting, that he could not resist the opportunity of going to work on that. His whole conduct seems, in fact, as though it were intended to practically illustrate De Quincey's famous essay on "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts." By giving way to this temptation *en route*, the great object of his journey was frustrated; he was seized and shut up in the asylum for life. Here, as I have said, he amused himself with painting, in which he was a great proficient; he suffered his subjects to be chosen for him, only stipulating that they were such as would admit of the introduction of plenty of blood. His last work, if I remember right, was entitled *The Good Samaritan*, and the victim by the wayside had certainly been made to lose a considerable quantity of the vital fluid.

days the juries were more considerate about running their respective counties into expenses. The case of Captain Bruluman is a curious illustration of this, the plea of insanity not having been even set up for him, as it seems. The crime for which he suffered was committed in Philadelphia, but when the United States were a British colony, and therefore, I conclude, the proceedings were conducted precisely as they would have been at home. This Bruluman had been a silversmith, but had left that business for the army, in which he had risen to be a captain in the Royal American Regiment. He was "broken," however, for counterfeiting base money, and disliking a vagabond life, determined, according to his own account, upon the commission of some crime for which he would certainly be hanged.* After forming this design, he loads his gun with a brace of bullets, and asks his landlord to go shooting with him, with the intention of killing that individual. Luckily for the latter, he had some business which kept him at home, so Bruluman sallies forth alone, gun in hand, with the cheerful intention, quite devoid of malice, of putting its contents into *somebody*. He meets a gentleman on the road, who seems to his easily-satisfied mind a person very suitable to his purpose, but *upon reflecting that there are no witnesses present to prove him*

* Like Hadfield, whose case I shall presently glance at, he seems to have entertained religious scruples against committing suicide.

guilty,* he suffers him to go by scathless. He then enters an inn, and hearing some people in a public-room overhead playing at billiards, he joins them, and hangs his gun up in their apartment. All the company are unknown to him, but he enters into conversation with them in apparent good-humour. Upon Mr. Scull, one of the players, making a winning hazard, Bruluman observes: "Sir, you are a good marksman! now I'll show you a fine stroke." With that he takes down his gun, levels it at Mr. Scull (who imagines him, of course, to be in jest), deliberately takes aim, and shoots him through the body. He then goes up to the dying man, who is still sensible, and thus addresses him: "Sir, I have no malice or ill-will against you; I never saw you before; but I was determined to kill somebody, that I might be hanged, and you happen to be the man. I am sincerely sorry for your misfortune."

Mr. Scull had time to send for his friends and to make his will, after which he expired, begging that his murderer might, if possible, be pardoned. Captain Bruluman, however, was promptly put upon his trial, sentenced, and hanged, without the least suggestion

** The morbid desire of suffering death at the hand of the law has recurred again—in the case of the murder of the poor boy in Chatham lines—since the above chapter was written. Where the criminal expresses this longing to his friends, would it not be better, *before* he proceeds to the act of homicide, to gratify him by a summary execution?

being made as to his being of unsound mind. He is described as having "exulted" when upon the scaffold.

In 1787, Samuel Burt, a young man of excellent character, but characterized as labouring under great depression of mind, evinced this same remarkable desire to suffer death at the hands of the law. "Being aware," writes his biographer, in total unconsciousness of his own satire, "that though the crime of Murder, under particular circumstances, has found mercy, that of Forgery was unpardonable," Burt committed the latter offence. Upon being found "guilty," and asked by the Recorder of London why sentence of death should not be passed on him, he thus replied: "My lord, I am too sensible of the crime I have committed, and for which I justly deserve to suffer, not to know that I have forfeited my life, which I wish to resign into the hands of Him who gave it. To give my reasons for this would only satisfy an idle curiosity; no one can feel a more sensible heart-felt satisfaction in the hopes of passing shortly into eternity, wherein, I trust, I shall meet with great felicity. I have no desire to live; and as the jury and court in my trial thought proper to recommend me to mercy, if his Majesty should in consequence thereof grant me a respite, I here vow in the face of Heaven that I will put an end to my own existence as soon as I can."

The only case in these strange annals of the past that seems precisely to resemble those which are so well known to our modern courts of justice under the

euphonious title of "Homicidal Mania," is that of David Williams. This youth, having become through accident a cripple, fell into so morbid and despairing a state of mind as to determine to have done with life. The idea of suicide he rejected, as a crime too great for Heaven to pardon, as likewise the murder of a grown person with all his sins upon his head; but to put a guileless child to death seemed to him a harmless as well as certain method of getting himself hanged. His incessant desire to effect this purpose, Williams himself described as "something like a hankering after fruit." This he eventually gratified, under particularly atrocious circumstances, and *for once* "old Father Antic, the Law," understood that it had a lunatic to deal with, and decreed accordingly.

Crime, however, produced by fanaticism, was by no means uncommon at the beginning of the present century, and it seems to have been set down to its proper cause. Though Science was rarely permitted in court to speak in mitigation, Religion obtained a hearing, otherwise the Rev. John Carroll, Catholic priest in Wexford, would, without doubt, have been hanged for working miracles which resulted in the death of the person sought to be benefited. This unfortunate man appears to have been seized with an ambition to rival the Rev. Prince Hohenlohe, whose pretended cures made such a sensation, and in 1824 he started as a wonder-worker upon his own account. He had always been a little wild upon

the subject of exorcism, and given to imagining that everybody who chanced to disagree with him was possessed by a devil; but by the use of sedative medicines and obedience to his medical adviser, he had up to this date kept his enthusiasm within reasonable limits. On a certain day, however, and while in the actual performance of divine service, he became suddenly conscious of being endowed with miraculous powers, and rushed out of his chapel in search of an object for their immediate manifestation. One of his parishioners, named Neill, happening to be confined to his bed by illness, he entered his cottage, and precipitated himself upon the unhappy invalid. The process which the priest regarded as most particularly effectual for the sick was identical with a well-known remedy for heretics—namely, that of pommelling, and this he put into practice with excessive energy. After a long assault, he announced that he had accomplished his errand, and taken prisoner the enemy of mankind, whom it was now only necessary to immerse in the Red Sea, which (in the character of the river Slaney) chanced to be fortunately handy. He left the cottage, therefore, in an attitude of importance commensurate with the greatness of the occasion, with one arm akimbo, and the other extended, as one of the witnesses expressed it, "as if he held the devil by the tail," and so with measured pace and mysterious aspect, he dropped the imaginary demon over the bridge. All on a sudden, however, it struck Father Carroll, that the

patient had seven more devils to be treated in the same manner, and he returned post-haste to his sick parishioner, who no sooner perceived the exorcist returning than he leapt out of bed, and acknowledged himself perfectly cured. This very natural proceeding was taken by the spectators as proof of Carroll's super-human powers, and established his medical reputation. He at once accepted a pressing invitation to pay a visit to a sick child, whom he straightway put under a tub, on the top of which he stood and danced till daylight, when, it is needless to say, the poor little patient was discovered to have been suffocated. For this murder the fanatic was tried. Two physicians—prototypes of our medical "experts" of the witness-box—were examined for the defence, however, and Father Carroll was acquitted as insane.

The case of Amy George, in the same year, is noteworthy as having arisen from the religious "revivals" of that time. The girl in question was one of the workers in a mine at Redruth, in Cornwall, and her family and herself were Methodists. "I went for her," says her mother, "to the revival one night, about half-past ten o'clock, *she having been there from two o'clock in the day*. I found the chapel extremely crowded. My daughter caught sight of me, and immediately lifted up her arms, and intreated her dear father and myself to perceive the spiritual danger we were in. She had lost her bonnet, cloak, handkerchief, and pattens, and was

extremely disordered in her dress. . . . She would sometimes come home praying horribly; it is generally called 'screeching for mercy.' . . . My daughter's conduct after attending the revivals was quite different to what it had been." From the girl's own confession, it appears that she became impressed with the necessity of murdering some child in order to secure its eternal happiness. She expresses her regret that on one occasion, when she saw a little boy, a stranger, standing by the engine-house of the mine, she did not push him down the shaft. She owns to having let slip another opportunity of the same description, where "there were two children at play, and another shaft close alongside of the road." On returning home one evening, her mother observed: "Your supper is ready for you, Amy; you can take it, for I am going to meeting, and little Benny [a child of seven years old] will remain at home with you." She felt glad at being thus left alone with her brother, as she would be thereby enabled to put her cherished purpose into execution. She gave the child part of her supper, and said to him: "Should you like to go to heaven, dear?" Then she took down a black silk handkerchief, and put it round her brother's neck, tying it, as she thought, in a running knot, and asked him: "Is it too tight, dear?" The child looked up in her face, and smiled, and said "No." There was a crook behind the door, and she took the child up with one arm, and with the other hand put the handkerchief over the crook, and looked him full

in the face, and left the room. Upon the mother's return, she found the little fellow dead behind the door.

The case of this poor visionary seems to have excited unusual commiseration, and the court, in ordering her to be detained in custody as a lunatic, assured her friends that she would not long be kept from them. The revival in Redruth, which certainly caused the death of the child, probably saved the life of his murderess. Had Amy George gone out of her mind without its assistance, and independently of any general fanaticism, she would have been left to her fate. In Copenhagen, in 1767, we are told by the *Annual Register* of that date, "that persons in that city were seized with a disorder of mind extremely dangerous to society. This is an imagination that, by committing premeditated murder, and being afterwards condemned to die for it, they are the better able, by public marks of repentance and conversion as they go to the scaffold, to prepare themselves for death, and work out their own salvation. . . . In order, however, to take from these wretches all hope of obtaining their end, and to extirpate the evil, the King has issued an ordinance, by which his Majesty forbids the punishing of them with death, and enacts that they shall be branded in the forehead with a red-hot iron, and whipped; that they shall afterwards be confined in a house of correction for the rest of their days, in order to be kept there to hard labour; and,

lastly, that, every year, on the day of their crime, they shall be whipped anew in public."

The old criminal law dealt wholesale with the peccant human family, and only in very recent times has acquired its daintier sense, and made allowance for idiosyncrasies. However humiliating is the confession, one cannot but see that the reason of this was, in part, that the case of the criminal was not held in very high account; that exertions were not made in his favour which would have been made had a landed property instead of a human life been the matter in question. If you committed a will instead of a murder, there were infinite pains taken by those to whom you had not left your money to prove that you were a totally irresponsible being. Upon the other hand, those who benefited by your bequest were eager to show that you were a person of excellent judgment, or if you had done some odd things in your life, that they were caused by the eccentricity of genius. One of the most curious instances of this occurred in 1838, in which a will, wherein the testator had left his money, away from his relatives, to his housekeeper, was disputed on the ground of intrinsic evidence of insanity in the document itself. Therein the testator had directed his executors "that they should cause some part of his bowels to be converted into fiddle-strings; that others should be sublimed into smelling-salts, and that the remainder of his body should be vitrified into lenses for optical pur-

poses." Sir H. Jenner, however, held that insanity was not proved, although the deceased had certainly exhibited a most uncommon desire of making himself generally useful.

The only case in the old criminal annals which seems very closely to resemble what we now call "kleptomania," was that of Rear-Admiral Bradley, who, in 1814, was convicted of forgery to the amount of three pounds, eight shillings and sixpence! Twopence each, it appears, was at that time given for all foreign letters for England to the captain of the vessel that brought them home, and the postmaster at each port was instructed to pay the money for the same. Accordingly, on the 10th of March the gallant admiral brought four hundred letters to the post-office at Gosport, and received the usual sum for them. After this he came again and again, and on one occasion brought a great number which purported to have arrived by the *Mary and Jane*, then lying off Cowes. For the money for these he gave his own receipt, but signed it with the name William Johnson. The postmaster's suspicions being naturally aroused, inquiries were made, and it was discovered that the *Mary and Jane* did not lie off Cowes, nor anywhere else, but was a phantom ship which owed its being entirely to the rear-admiral's fancy. He frankly confessed that his name was not Johnson, "although he had a friend in Portugal of that name." Upon this he was fully committed, and brought to trial

at Winchester. Evidence was brought forward of his conduct having been always very eccentric, and he received an excellent character from many of his brother-officers. He was found "guilty," however, and condemned to death, and all that his friends could finally procure for him was a remission of the sentence into transportation for life.

COMING TO LIFE AGAIN.

One of the most beautiful poems in *In Memoriam* speculates upon the kind of reception the Dead would meet with from their relatives, supposing that they could resume their life once more, with all their privileges of heirship and of marriage. As for the writer, he avers that whatever change the years have wrought, he finds not yet one lonely thought that cries against his wish for his dead friend; but with regard to others, there is some reasonable doubt.

> "'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
> To pledge them with a kindly tear:
> To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
> To count their memories half divine;
>
> "But if they came who past away,
> Behold their brides in other hands:
> The hard heir strides about their lands,
> And will not yield them for a day."

Certainly, it would be the height of inconvenience for the widow, who has just given permission to Captain Dangleton to entertain a golden hope of becoming her

No. 2, to find her No. 1 resuscitated; and still worse, if she has actually become Mrs. D. in the interim. Nor would it be altogether gratifying to the most devoted of sons to exchange the tangible proceeds of a rent-roll for the old expectancy, or rather for a worse one, since *post-obits* would never be renewed for him after such a catastrophe. And yet, such resuscitations have happened, not once only, but very many times.

In 1685, a miller at Abbeville, passing by the gallows where a robber had been suspended on the previous day, perceived some signs of life in him. Being moved with compassion, he managed, with the assistance of his servant, to take him down, and convey him home in his cart. There he tended him carefully until the felon was quite restored to health, with the intention of dismissing him with a sum of money, in order that the poor wretch might be enabled to recommence life in an honest manner. Unfortunately, however, this good Samaritan delayed the execution of this design too long; and on a certain Sunday—of all days in the week—this ungrateful scoundrel left the hospitable mill with as much of the money and valuables of the owner as he could lay his hands on. Now, it so happened that the curate of Abbeville had preached an unusually short discourse, and the miller and his men came home from church in time to overtake the robber. This they did; and without wasting any more valuable time in reforming him, they took him to the gallows upon which they had found him, with many apologies for having

disturbed him there, in the first instance, and there they hanged him, with particular care; "pulling his wicked legs," adds the chronicler, "to make sure that he should thieve no more." Nevertheless, the doers of this most righteous deed had to flee the country, until a pardon was obtained for them from the most Christian king.

This seems to confirm the poet's theory, that in most cases dead people should remain so, keeping in mind the excellence of the saying, "Let bygones be bygones"; nevertheless, here is a case to the contrary. In the Church of the Apostles at Cologne there is a large picture descriptive of the restoration to life of Reichmuth Adolch, the wife of a counsellor of that city, under circumstances which have been borrowed for materials to construct many fictitious stories of a similar kind. This lady was supposed to have died of the plague, which devastated Cologne in 1571; but being buried with a valuable ring on her finger, the sexton of the church thought it a pity such good jewellery should be wasted, and opened her coffin on the very night of her interment. This conduct she resented by sitting up and collaring him on the instant, whereupon he fled with excusable precipitation, under the idea that he had irritated an inhabitant of the other world. Mrs. Adolch, however, was far from dead; and leaving the vault, at once proceeded, in her grave-clothes, to her own house. She was not, however, "out of the wood" yet, except in the literal sense. The maid-servant,

aroused by her ringing, declined to let her in, although she narrated the circumstances of her reappearance, through the keyhole, in order to still her fears. The girl was either really too terrified, or preferred a situation without a female head to it, for she did not open the door, but ran to her master's room, who informed her for her pains that she was a mad woman; and all this time the poor lady was shivering in her shroud, and almost wishing herself back again under cover. At length she was admitted, and by means of proper treatment, so entirely recovered that "she afterwards had three sons who were clergymen."

A still more wonderful death-in-life experience is that of François de Civille, who, to use his own words, was "thrice dead, thrice interred, and thrice, by the grace of God, restored to life." The mother of this gentleman, having died during pregnancy, was buried in her husband's absence without any attempt being made to save her offspring; but upon the return of the good man immediately afterwards, he caused her to be disinterred, when, by means of the Cæsarian operation, a living child rewarded his pious care. This child was five-and-twenty years old and a captain in Rouen when that city was taken by Charles IX. Being dreadfully wounded, and having fallen from the rampart into the ditch, some pioneers threw him, with another dead body, into a hole, and covered him with a little earth. Here he lay for seven hours, until his faithful servant came at dusk and dug him up, when, finding some

signs of life, he was removed to his own home, where he lay for five days and nights insensible and speechless. The city being taken by assault, the besiegers, who required his apartment for their own uses, threw him out of window upon a dunghill; and from this couch, which seems to have possessed none of those disadvantageous qualities which modern science ascribes to it, he was rescued after a few days by a relative, who removed him to a place of safety, where he obtained a perfect cure. Extraordinary as this story appears, it seems to have at least considerable foundation; nor was François de Civille a Gascon, as may be supposed, but a gentleman of Normandy.

An undoubtedly true experience of resuscitation is that of Margaret Dixon, of Musselburgh, who was hanged at Edinburgh for child-murder in 1728. There seems to be great doubt as to her being guilty of the offence with which she was charged, and therefore her narrow escape is as satisfactory as strange. At the place of execution, while owning to many sins, she avowed her total innocence of the crime in question, and her husband—who had much to forgive—implicitly believed that statement. After the body had been suspended the usual time, it was delivered to her friends, who put it in a coffin, and sent it in a cart to be interred in her native place. The persons in charge stopped to drink at a public-house on the way, and while they were refreshing themselves, Mrs. Dixon gave indications to the bystanders that she should like to take a little some-

thing, or, at all events, to get out also. Most of them ran away in terror, but one had the presence of mind to bleed her, and got her put to bed; and by the following morning she was well enough to walk to her destination. By the Scottish law, it seems that a person upon whom judgment has once been executed cannot suffer a second time, while the marriage of the party supposed to have been executed is held to be dissolved. All that the King's advocate could do, therefore, was to file a bill in the High Court of Justiciary against the unfortunate sheriff for omitting to fulfil the law, which was accordingly done. The husband of the revived lady married her publicly within a few days of her resuscitation, and she was living so late as the year 1753.

In the second series of Captain Gronow's "Recollections," there is a curious narrative of escape from premature interment.

In the retreat of the French army, he tells us that General Ornano, a Corsican, second husband of the beautiful Comtesse Walewska, and a distant relation of the Buonaparte family, received a severe wound from the bursting of a shell, which killed his horse, and several soldiers who were near him. The general's aide-de-camp, on looking round, observed Ornano lying on his back, to all appearance dead, with the blood flowing from his mouth. A surgeon soon arrived, and declared that life was extinct. The aide-de-camp and a few soldiers commenced digging a grave; but the ground was so hard, owing to the terrible cold that prevailed,

that they could not make it deep enough to cover the body, and being pressed for time, they arranged the supposed corpse in decent order, and covered it with snow instead of earth. After this was done, the aide-de-camp reported to the Emperor Napoleon, who was not far off, the loss that the army had sustained in General Ornano, who was only twenty-six years of age, and the youngest officer of his rank in the army. The Emperor, who was very fond of the general, was deeply grieved, and exclaimed:

"Poor fellow! He was one of my best cavalry officers!" and turning to one of his orderlies, desired him to go immediately and find out all about the wound which had caused his death. The officer, in order to satisfy himself upon this point, had the dead man taken out of the snow, and on looking at the wound, observed that the body was still warm. Furs and flannels were accordingly heaped upon the corpse, which was placed upon a shutter, and taken to head-quarters. After much care and perseverance, he was restored to life, to the joy of the Emperor and the whole army.

"General Ornano," concludes Captain Gronow, "is now (1863) a Marshal of France and Governor of the Invalides, and related the above anecdote to one of my friends last summer."

The most striking of all known cases of premature interment, however, is that related in the "Causes Célèbres," and which has formed the text of many a tale, and the trelliswork of many a moving ballad.

Shelley, for instance, has embalmed it in his "Ginevra," and Leigh Hunt in his beautiful "Legend of Florence."

Two tradesmen of the Rue St. Honoré, in Paris, being old friends, and possessing one a son and the other a daughter, had early determined, as their betters have often done, upon the marriage of these two young people. They looked forward to thus uniting their two "establishments" with the same pride that two country gentlemen sometimes feel in joining their adjacent estates by the union of the young squire with the heiress, while they were more fortunate than fathers in a similar position sometimes find themselves, since that which they had set their minds upon, their offspring were equally anxious to accomplish also. Not very long, however, before the time actually fixed for the celebration of these nuptials, a rich banker took a fancy to the young lady, and having won golden opinions from her parents, obtained her hand, all previous promises and contracts notwithstanding. They discovered that uniting the two establishments was not of such paramount importance after all, and that carriage-exercise was essential to the health of their beloved daughter.

The dutiful girl obeyed their wishes without much opposition; but so far from improving her constitution, she fell into a state of morbid melancholy, which resulted in lethargy and apparent death; whereupon the banker buried her in a manner that left nothing to be desired. Now, like a virtuous young woman as she was, she had forbidden her former lover ever to present himself be-

fore her again, and to this prohibition he had bowed; but since she was interred, and given up by her husband, he thought it no harm to bribe the sexton of the vault in which she lay to let him have one farewell look at her loved face before its beauty withered into dust; and this the more—it must be confessed—since once already she had fallen into a prolonged trance, which gave him a scintillation of hope that she might not be actually deceased even yet.

Having carried the body to his own house, and using every means of restoration he could think of, he really did succeed in bringing her back to life. The astonishment of the lady upon resuscitation was of course extreme, but we do not hear so much about her sorrow; and yielding to the many plausible arguments he urged in favour of his suit, she consented to accompany him to England, where they married, and lived together in much content. After several years, desiring to revisit his native land, and feeling convinced that nobody would suspect his wife's identity, the husband returned to Paris, and within a very few days the happy pair came suddenly upon the bereaved banker, in the public street. If the young woman had been alone, she might perhaps have pretended to be a spirit, or hit upon some other ingenious expedient to hoodwink the widower, but seeing her arm-in-arm with her former lover, the coincidence was a little too striking to be explained away. The banker, who does not seem to have set any extraordinary value upon her while she was his own, was transported

with the desire of repossessing her, and laid his claim at once before a legal tribunal. The cause was argued at length upon both sides. The advocate for the lover argued, that but for him the lady would have now had no existence, would have been dead, and neither the wife of the banker nor of anybody else; that her first husband had divested himself of all his rights in interring her; and even that he might think himself lucky in not being indicted for homicide for consigning her to a living tomb. But although the spirit of the law might be with husband No. 2, the letter was against him; and seeing that the court was inclined to favour his adversary's suit, he prudently anticipated its decision by returning once more to England, where the lady and himself remained until the banker died. How the law of Great Britain would decide so extraordinary a matter, I cannot tell; but with respect to incomplete executions—however it may have been in Scotland at the period of Mrs. Dixon's case—the idea that a resuscitated malefactor is no longer answerable for his crime seems to be the merest assumption; the sentence runs, that he is to be hanged by the neck until he be *dead;* and if he be *not* dead, it is clear that the sentence has not been carried out, and that the offender is still subject to the forfeit. The Crown, of course, would be able to remit the penalty, but only by a free pardon, as it might have done before the first execution; and, indeed, there is a case in point.

In 1350, a criminal, named Walter Wynkbourne,

was hanged at Leicester, and having been taken down after the lapse of the usual period, was found to be yet alive. Some were for recommencing the execution, but the more humane took him to sanctuary, in the Church of St. Sepulchre in that town, until the will of the king should be known. Edward III., the then monarch, happened to be with the religious in Leicester Monastery at the very time, and an application was at once made to his clemency. The king thereupon forgave the criminal in Latin, which, I hope, was translated to him without delay—*Deus tibi dedit vitam, et nos tibi dabimus castam* (God hath given thee life, and we will give thee pardon).

FRAUDULENT BANKRUPTCY.

Among all the mitigations of punishment that have been introduced of late years into the statute-book, those relating to offences against commerce are the most remarkable. A few months' imprisonment, followed by the presentation of "a third-class certificate," are evils which now befall a man for doing what in the last century would have subjected him to the penalty of death. It is even at this date sometimes objected that a man may brutally ill-treat a fellow-creature, with less danger to himself, from the retributive arm of the law, than he will incur from maliciously breaking a window; but in the old times property was held yet more sacred, and flesh and blood far cheaper. Apologists for this state of things were never wanting, even among benevolent persons. "In a commercial country like our own, sir," said they, with their thumbs, doubtless, in the armholes of their long waistcoats, "such severity is absolutely necessary for our social protection." There was very little "protection" for the bankrupt, however, and if anything was "suspended," it was not that, but him-

self, *per col.* Commercial scoundrels have now a comparative immunity, and it must be confessed that they have improved in some respects. In the present mild and genial atmosphere of our bankruptcy laws, they flourish and expand into magnificence. They rob the widow and the orphan by wholesale, without the least prejudice to any individual in particular; their manners are generally frank and agreeable, and their mode of life almost always that of open-handed gentlemen. Their predecessors, on the contrary, were pettifogging persons, whose transactions were contemptibly small; they confined themselves to ruining one or two individuals upon the sly, and therein, as we cannot but suspect, must have been sooner or later actuated by malice, or the sense of a wrong begun, which is even worse; while they rarely confined themselves to mere commercial frauds, but upon the principle of it being as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb, they often did things unbecoming a gentleman and a fraudulent bankrupt. They kept low company too, and so far from having a house in town and a house in the country, lived "over" obscure coffee-houses and in mean apartments.

These thoughts occurred to me when, on a beautiful October day, I found myself taking part in a large picnic-party on a certain maritime estate, the abdicated monarch of which had been a commercial defaulter on the grandest scale. He had had a bank of his very own, which had suddenly broken up, and all had gone

down who had put their trust in it, except himself, who had clung to some considerable fragments, and been preserved. He was supposed to have three thousand a year or so still left to live upon, but in a foreign land, and destitute of many things that were doubtless necessaries of life to him, such as Severn salmon, white-bait (which will not bear transit across the Channel), and the Anglican Choral Service, to which he was particularly attached.

He had built a beautiful chapel near his mansion—and how could the widows and orphans hope for a better investment of their money?—with stained windows and carved ceilings; the lectern was highly gilded, the chancel was panelled with oak; everything, in short, was ecclesiastical in the highest degree, and breathed not a syllable of bankruptcy, except the organ, whose notes (it being out of order) were stopped. It may be urged—and, indeed, it had been urged pretty strongly—that a bankrupt of such high principles should have surrendered himself, and given up his little all for the use of his creditors; but to these arguments he had responded, in a gentlemanly and quiet manner that was peculiar to him, that the remnant of his goods (waiving the question for the present as to whether they were his or no) were a mere drop in the ocean of his liabilities; that they could do no good divided among the army of widows and orphans (even taking that uncommercial and ultra-sentimental view of the circum-

stances of his creditors), whereas the money was just sufficient to supply himself with little comforts in his enforced exile. With regard to this last matter, he explained that he had left England on account of the state of his bronchial tubes; if he were in health, nothing would have afforded him greater satisfaction than to have cleared himself from every imputation upon his character in the Bankruptcy Court, or before any other tribunal; but as it was, instead of presenting himself in person, he begged to forward a medical certificate from a doctor of the University of Christiania, and very highly thought of in his own country, explaining that the air of Norway (beneficial as he, the bankrupt, had already found it) had not as yet sufficiently renovated his constitution to admit of a visit to his native shores.

Of his letter containing these very sensible remarks I did not possess a copy (although it had been widely published), but the sentiments, which I am conscious of having reproduced very feebly in comparison with the nervous grace of the original manuscript, were indelibly imprinted on my memory. I could think of nothing else, in that stately but dismantled hall, but of the bankrupt who had once inhabited it, and I left the joyous and unthinking throng to muse in solitude upon his singular career. I had never seen him, I had never lost anything by him (which are almost synonymous expressions), but yet I felt intensely interested in him, as I strolled amid the ruins of his unjustifiable gran-

deur. The estate was extensive, and very beautiful; he had purchased it as a wilderness, and he had made it smile, for the few years that he had been its lord, like a garden. He had rescued swampy acres from the devouring sea; yea, he had taken in the very land, and used it for his own purposes. As though he had found not sufficient game among his fellow-creatures, he had built a pheasantry in one of the woods. The birds had flown, or rather had been disposed of after the grand crash, at that great sale at the Hall which had set all the country agog, and swelled the advertising columns of half the London newspapers; and the empty cages stood with rusty wires, through which the unpruned laurels and wild honeysuckles strove to make their way. A swing, constructed on the best principles, and costing, I should guess, as much as a dozen ordinary swings, hung broken, whereon, perhaps, happy, innocent children had often taken their pleasure, unconscious of impending ruin. In the midst a Triton, once a fountain, struggled in vain with the ivy's hundred arms. A grotto, lined with exquisite sea-shells, which had only not been picked out for the benefit of the creditors because it was found they broke in the process, crowned this scene of desolation. The artificial lake, once carefully cleared from water-weeds, was now so crammed therewith that the defaced and dingy pleasure-skiffs, rotting in the rotting boat-house, could scarce have made way through them. The gravelled paths that led through

heath and wilderness, and over crags beneath which the limitless sea outspread, were rank with moss, or overgrown with briar.

Nearer the Hall itself, the ruin was even still more ghastly. Nothing remained firm and stable but the pigeon-house, which, as might have been expected, was very large; it stood upon its lofty pole—a substantial sarcasm—the very sign and emblem of the bankrupt's home. The mansion was of immense extent, with gilded ceilings, and chimney-pieces curiously carved. Here and there great slabs of oaken panelling had been cut bodily out for the sake of the pictures painted on them; everything that was of the least value of itself had been borne away; but the fixtures were left, in hopes that some tenant might be found wealthy enough to "take to" them along with the Hall. Thus, along the great conservatories, stripped of their choice flowers, the empty water-pipes, cold and useless, still ran in triple fold; the marble bath-rooms mocked one with their "hot" and "cold" and "tepid" handles; the statues, that once were fountains, stood naked and dusty, robbed of their silver music. Some melancholy aloes, in decaying tubs, added bitterness to the scene. On the quay stood a watch-tower in ruins, and the steps were green and slimy by which the lordly bankrupt was wont to embark in his eight-oared galley.

The legends of this man that hung about the place, and were retailed by the aborigines as gladly as they

were accepted by the gaping visitors, were redeemed from all vulgarity by the scale of grandeur on which they were built. The sense of his crime was sunk in appreciation of his magnificence. He had robbed as no man had ever robbed before him, but he had spent the money like a prince, and dismissing the depreciatory fact that he had no right to one farthing of it, the bankrupt was an accomplished gentleman, a man of taste, a connoisseur in sacred music, in painting (strictly classical), and in the fine arts generally. An excellent landlord, a genial friend, a munificent patron of the Church, his character (but for that one little blot aforesaid) ran like an epitaph. I could not but endeavour to picture the feelings of the man himself, placed on this bad eminence, and cultivating all social relations in so admirable a manner. Was he able to dismiss from his mind the sense of his own shame? Did he excuse away his enormous guilt? That letter from Norway led me rather to imagine that he succeeded in doing this. I had heard that he had of late been obliged to visit Paris for the best medical advice—could it be possible that his conscience began to tell upon his digestion? No; he was altogether too well-bred a man.

Now, while I reflected upon this matter, my memory suddenly presented to me the case of another bankrupt —not on account of any similarity between the two, but from their violent contrast. Both of them, indeed,

were Curiosities of Crime, but the one was an example of impunity, and the other of the utmost severity of punishment. The bankrupt of whose involuntary hospitality I was then partaking had the good fortune to cross the Channel, which, if he had not done, serious consequences would have befallen him. He would have had to disgorge much of his little all, and might even have been imprisoned for several months. The other bankrupt whom I have in my mind's eye did *not* cross the Channel, and the consequence was as follows.

In the autumn of 1712 Richard Town was tried at the Old Bailey for withdrawing himself from his creditors, after a commission of bankruptcy had been issued against him, and with fraudulently removing tallow valued at £400, as well as £400 in money, with his debt-books and books of account. Altogether, therefore, Mr. Town had but taken £800 with him, with the intention of living upon that modest property in a foreign land. Standing upon my other bankrupt's property, and beholding his mansion and his pigeon-house, I protest that his fraudulent prototype seemed by comparison positively an honest man. An honest man, however, with the very hardest luck in the world; the most unfortunate wretch (to be guilty) in all the annals of criminal law, as I do believe. He had gone down to Sandwich, with the intention of sailing in a certain vessel to Amsterdam; but being too late for that, he had to embark in the

common packet-boat to Ostend. Now, this modest £800 he carried about his person, *in guineas,* between his coat and his waistcoat. Moreover, in his legitimate pockets he had twenty guineas in gold and five pounds seven and sixpence in silver. But all this money did not prevent Mr. Richard Town from being excessively sea-sick. A severe gale having arisen, he had to betake himself to the side of the vessel, like many a more honest man,* and among his other offerings to Neptune, he dropped his 800 guineas in gold into the sea. Is it possible to imagine a more melancholy situation than that of this poor man? Dreadfully sea-sick; very likely suffering from the pangs of conscience; certainly having lost the money for which he had risked so much, and on which alone he calculated for future subsistence! And yet a still greater misfortune remained in store.

The gale grew so violent that the packet-boat was absolutely driven back, and forced to put into Sandwich. Conceive the feelings of our fraudulent bankrupt during that return voyage! It is said that no man with money

* A curious instance of the universality of this weakness is afforded by the following ancient tenure: "Solomon Attefield held land at Keperland and Atterton, in the county of Kent, that as often as our lord the king would cross the sea, the said Solomon and his heirs should go along with him, to hold his *head,* if it was needful." A dreadful service surely for that ancient house to perform, if the Attefields themselves were liable to the *mal de mer.*

in his pocket ever gives up hope; but it would have been far better for Richard Town (as will be seen) if he had thrown the rest of his pocket-money (or, at least, ten pounds of it) into the same sea which had swallowed up his two bags of gold. He was met at Sandwich by an emissary of the law, who had previously been biting his nails on the quay, because, as he fancied, he had just missed him. "But doth not a meeting like this make amends?" must have been that bailiff's thought, although probably not his exact expression, since he lived anterior to Mr. Thomas Moore. His vulgar joy, the prostration and despair of his victim, can easily be imagined. This officer, having searched the poor fellow, took away his £25, "but left him the odd silver." Being put upon his trial, poor Town discovered that it had been enacted: "Did any person, being a bankrupt, after the month of April, 1707, fraudulently conceal, embezzle, or make away with goods or money *to the value of* £20, he should be deemed guilty of felony;" and felony, in those days, was punished by death. Now, the £800, which he had lost in the sea, it was difficult to prove that he had possessed himself of; but the £25 found on his person brought him within the Act. Richard Town was the first person who underwent the extreme penalty of the law for the offence of Fraudulent Bankruptcy, and he refused to acknowledge the justice of his sentence. When sentence was passed upon him, he was put into the condemned hole with the vilest prisoners,

and there caught so violent a cold as to render him stone deaf. To complete his misfortunes, he was hanged, we are told, upon his birthday—"a circumstance which, with great composure, he mentioned to the Ordinary of Newgate on his way to the place of execution."

THE END.

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